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Young People's Experiences of Crime: an Investigation into the Victimisation and Offending of Inner-City Dublin Youth

Kalis Pope
Technological University Dublin

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**Dublin Institute of Technology
Faculty of Applied Arts
School of Social Sciences**

**Young People's Experiences of Crime:
An Investigation into the Victimisation and
Offending of Inner-City Dublin Youth**

Kalis Pope

**Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Supervisor: Dr. Kevin Lalor
Advisory Supervisor: Professor Ken Pease**

ABSTRACT

This project is one of the first empirical investigations into youth victimisation and offending in Ireland and is one of three research projects that were established under the *Youth Crime Research Project: Young People's Experiences of Crime*. Victim surveys are of particular interest to this study, as they help to illuminate the 'dark figure' of crime through ascertaining individual's experiences of victimisation, while simultaneously collecting pertinent information regarding their own level of criminality. A common failure among the majority of victim surveys, however, is that they do not investigate the experiences of young people. This project seeks to address this deficiency. Through the use of a victim survey, structural equation models, and focus groups, this research will also analyse the extent and nature of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin, possible correlations between victimisation and offending behaviour, the role parental supervision and routine activities/lifestyle choices play in determining the risk of victimisation and offending, and the role gender plays in young people's experiences of crime. Previous research has shown that victimisation is a strong indicator of likely participation in delinquent behaviour. However, many young people have been victimised, yet do not pursue a delinquent lifestyle as a result, suggesting a strong similarity between victimogenic and criminogenic risk factors, such as age and environment. The control that guardians exert over youth is also paramount in determining what type of lifestyle youth can pursue in the first place. As youth cannot be supervised at all times, the lifestyle choices they make regardless of parental influence, will also be investigated. Finally, this research aims to be instrumental in the future development of a nationwide survey of youth experiences of crime in Ireland.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute or University.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature-

_____Date_____

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	i.
Declaration	ii.
Acknowledgements	iii.
Table of Contents	v.
List of Tables	xi.
List of Figures	xiv.
Chapter 1:	
Introduction to the Thesis	
1.1 Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Research Questions	p. 1
1.2 Scope of the Study	p. 3
1.3 Research Design Synopsis	p. 5
1.4 Structure of the Thesis	p. 7
Chapter 2:	
Literature Review – Victimology and Victim Surveys	
2.1 Introduction	p. 11
2.2 Victimology - Definition and Scope	p. 11
2.3 The Emergence of Victimology	p. 13
2.4 Developmental Victimology	p. 18
2.5 Victim Surveys in Brief	p. 21
2.5.1 Introduction	p. 21
2.5.2 How Victim Surveys Are Used	p. 23
2.5.3 Reasons for the Use of Victim Surveys	p. 25
2.5.4 Reasons against the Use of Victim Surveys	p. 26
2.6 Conclusion	p. 29
Chapter 3:	
Literature Review - Youth Research in Ireland and the United Kingdom	
3.1 Introduction	p. 30
3.2 Young People’s Experiences of Crime in Ireland	p. 31
3.2.1 Crime in Ireland: An Overview	p. 31
3.2.2 Irish Youth Victim Research and the Role of Bullying Studies	p. 35

3.3	A Review of Seminal British Youth Victimization Studies	p. 40
3.3.1	Introduction	p. 40
3.3.2	<i>The Victimization of Juveniles: A Comparative Study of Three Areas of Publicly Owned Housing in Sheffield</i>	p. 41
3.3.3	<i>Cautionary Tales': A Study of Young People and Crime in Edinburgh</i>	p. 43
3.3.4	<i>More Sinned Against than Sinning: A Study of Young Teenagers' Experiences of Crime</i>	p. 46
3.3.5	<i>Young People, Victimization and the Police: British Crime Survey Findings on Experiences and Attitudes of 12 to 15 Year Olds</i>	p. 49
3.3.6	<i>The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime: Key Findings at Ages 12 and 13 (April 2001)</i>	p. 51
3.3.7	<i>Self-Reported Delinquency and Other Behaviours Amongst Young People in Northern Ireland</i>	p. 53
3.3.8	Seminal Research: Summary of Main Findings	p. 54
3.4	Important Themes Emerging from a Review of Recent Youth Crime Research	p. 56
3.4.1	Multiple and Repeat Victimization	p. 56
3.4.2	The Effects of Drug and Alcohol Use on Youth Experiences	p. 59
3.4.3	The Effect of Gender on Youth Experiences	p. 60
3.4.4	Evidence Based Crime Prevention	p. 61
3.5	Conclusion	p. 65

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1	Introduction	p. 67
4.2	Using Social Control and Bonding Theories to Identify the Roles of Parents and Criminal Friends in Youth Victimization and Offending	p. 68
4.3	Using Lifestyle and Routine Activities Theory to Explain The Link between Victims and Offenders	p. 73
4.4	Using Strain Theory to Explain How Victimization Can Lead to Offending and Negative Behaviour	p. 78
4.5	Using Rational Choice Theory and Situational Crime Prevention To Limit Delinquent Behaviour and Minimise Victimization Risk	p. 82
4.6	Conclusion	p. 86

Chapter 5: Survey Research Methodology

5.1	Introduction	p. 87
5.2	Research Design and Rationale Underpinning Choice of Design	p. 87
5.3	Participants	p. 89
5.3.1	Sampling Considerations	p. 89
5.3.2	Sample Size and Frame	p. 89
5.3.3	Sampling Problems and Difficulties	p. 94

5.4	Instruments and Measures	p. 95
5.4.1	The Survey: Structure and Design	p. 95
5.4.2	Justification for the Creation of Novel Scales	p. 101
5.4.3	Youth Victimization Experience Scale (YVES)	p. 103
5.4.4	Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS)	p. 103
5.5	Procedures	p. 104
5.5.1	Piloting - Evaluating the Pilot and Updating the Survey	p. 104
5.5.2	Data Collection Procedures	p. 106
5.5.3	Timing and Procedures for Conducting the Survey	p. 107
5.5.4	Procedural Problems and Difficulties	p. 108
5.6	Ethical Considerations	p. 111
5.6.1	Age and Consent	p. 112
5.6.2	Assistance and Guidance	p. 113
5.7	Reflecting on the Research Process	p. 116
5.8	Conclusion	p. 118

Chapter 6: Survey Findings

6.1	Introduction	p. 119
6.2	Demographic Information	p. 119
6.2.1	Gender, Age and Ethnic Origin	p. 120
6.2.2	Living Situation	p. 120
6.3	Family Victimization and Crime in the Neighbourhood	p. 123
6.4	Frequency Results	p. 125
6.4.1	Types of Victimization Investigated	p. 125
6.4.2	Frequency of Minor Victimization Experiences	p. 126
6.4.3	Frequency of Property Victimization Experiences	p. 128
6.4.4	Frequency of Violent Victimization Experiences	p. 129
6.5	Frequency Results: Offending	p. 131
6.5.1	Types of Offending Investigated	p. 131
6.5.2	Frequency of Vandalism Offending Behaviour	p. 131
6.5.3	Frequency of Theft Offending Behaviour	p. 132
6.5.4	Frequency of Violent Offending Behaviour	p. 133
6.6	Victimization: Thoughts, Opinions and Effects	p. 134
6.6.1	The Victimization Incidents that Bothered Young People the Most	p. 134
6.6.2	Where, Who and Why? Everyday Events?	p. 136
6.6.3	How Victimization Affects You	p. 137
6.6.4	Why Young People Think Victimization Happens	p. 137
6.6.5	Attitudes toward the Gardaí	p. 138
6.6.6	Curfews and Free Time	p. 139
6.7	Gender Differences	p. 142
6.7.1	Gender Differences for Victimization	p. 142
6.7.2	Gender Differences for Offending	p. 144
6.7.3	Gender Differences for Drug Use and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes	p. 145
6.8	Sibling Living Arrangement Differences	p. 147
6.9	Victimization and Offending Differences for Parental Differences and Employment Status of Guardians	p. 148

6.10	Conclusion	p. 150
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Chapter 7:

Theoretical Introduction to Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling

7.1	Introduction	p. 151
7.2	What is Path Analysis and Factor Analysis?	p. 151
7.3	What is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)?	p. 155
7.4	Five Step Process for Structural Equation Modelling	p. 157
	7.4.1 Model Specification	p. 157
	7.4.2 Model Identification & Model Estimation	p. 158
	7.4.3 Testing Model Fit	p. 160
	7.4.4 Model Modification	p. 162
7.5	Advantages and Limitations of SEM	p. 163
7.6	Conclusion	p. 165

Chapter 8:

Empirical Investigation of the Theoretical Models

8.1	Introduction	p. 166
8.2	Analysis of CFA and SEM Procedures	p. 167
	8.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Procedures	p. 167
	8.2.2 Structural Equation Modelling Procedures	p. 168
8.3	Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Youth Victimization Experience Scale (YVES)	p. 170
	8.3.1 Factor Correlations	p. 172
	8.3.2 Composite Reliability	p. 173
8.4	Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS)	p. 174
	8.4.1 Factor Correlations	p. 176
	8.4.2 Composite Reliability	p. 177
8.5	Structural Equation Model of Victimization	p. 178
8.6	Structural Equation Model of Offending	p. 182
8.7	Chapter Summary	p. 187
8.8	Conclusion	p. 190

Chapter 9:

Focus Group Methodology and Findings

9.1	Introduction	p. 191
9.2	Research Design and Rationale behind the Use of Focus Groups	p. 191
9.3	Strengths and Weaknesses of Focus Groups	p. 194
9.4	Pilot Study	p. 196
9.5	Participants	p. 198
9.6	Focus Group Procedures	p. 199
9.7	Conducting the Focus Groups	p. 200
9.8	Thematic Analysis of the Focus Groups and Assessing Reliability/Validity	p. 202
9.9	Ethical and Methodological Issues	p. 203

9.10	Focus Group Findings	p. 205
	9.10.1 Victimisation	p. 205
	9.10.2 Offending	p. 207
	9.10.3 Free Time	p. 210
	9.10.4 Role of Adults, Safety and Attitudes toward the Gardaí	p. 212
	9.10.5 Gender Differences	p. 215
	9.10.6 What can be done?	p. 219
9.11	Chapter Summary	p. 221
9.12	Conclusion	p. 224

Chapter 10: Discussion of Findings

10.1	Introduction	p. 226
10.2	Discussion of Survey Findings	p. 227
	10.2.1 Summation of Victimisation Findings	p. 227
	10.2.2 Summation of Offending Findings	p. 228
	10.2.3 Comparison of Findings with Similar Research	p. 228
	10.2.4 Discussion of Differences	p. 230
	10.2.5 Discussion of Free Time, Routine Activities, Adults and Safety, and Attitudes toward the Gardaí	p. 236
	10.2.6 Implications, Limitations and Future Research	p. 238
10.3	Discussion of the Development of the YVES and the Structural Equation Model of Victimisation	p. 239
	10.3.1 Development of the YVES	p. 239
	10.3.2 Development of the Structural Equation Model of Victimisation	p. 240
	10.3.3 Implications, Limitations and Future Research	p. 245
10.4	Discussion of the Development of the YOBS and the Structural Equation Model of Offending	p. 246
	10.4.1 Development of the YOBS	p. 246
	10.4.2 Development of the Structural Equation Model of Offending	p. 247
	10.4.3 Implications, Limitations and Future Research	p. 251
10.5	Discussion of the Qualitative Research Findings: Focus Groups	p. 253
	10.5.1 Discussion of Findings	p. 253
	10.5.2 Implications	p. 256
	10.5.3 Limitations and Future Research	p. 257
10.6	Theoretical Implications of the Research Findings	p. 259

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1	Introduction	p. 260
11.2	Elements of the Research Performed to Establish the Empirical Findings	p. 261
	11.2.1 The Review of the Literature	p. 261
	11.2.2 The Creation of the Theoretical Framework	p. 262
11.3	Discovery of the Empirical Findings	p. 263
	11.3.1 Factors Leading to Victimisation and Offending	p. 263

11.3.2	Relationships between Victimization Experiences and Offending Behaviour	p. 264
11.3.3	Impact of Routine Activities, Lifestyles, Parental Supervision, and Gender	p. 264
11.4	Recommendations for Future Research	p. 265
11.4.1	General Recommendations for Future Research	p. 265
11.4.2	Methodological Recommendations for Future Research	p. 267
11.4.3	Policy Recommendations for Future Research	p. 269
11.5	Limitations, Strengths and Future Research Directions	p. 272
11.5.1	Limitations	p. 272
11.5.2	Strengths	p. 274
11.5.3	Future Research Directions	p. 275
11.6	Research Contribution	p. 277
	Bibliography	p. 279
	Appendices	p. 332
	Appendix A: Irish Youth Victimization Survey Questionnaire	p. 332
	Appendix B: Initial Letter Sent To All Schools	p. 342
	Appendix C: Follow-Up Letter for Those Who Had Not Yet Confirmed Their Participation	p. 343
	Appendix D: Follow-Up Letter to Participating Principals	p. 344
	Appendix E: Survey Procedure for School Secretaries/Principals	p. 345
	Appendix F: Letter to Parents/Guardians – Survey Research	p. 346
	Appendix G: Letter to Parents/Guardians – Focus Group Research	p. 347
	Appendix H: Survey Research Consent Form	p. 348
	Appendix I: Focus Group Research Consent Form	p. 349
	Appendix J: List of Helplines and Resources for Young People	p. 350
	Appendix K: DIT Ethical Approval for PhD	p. 351

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: <i>Seriousness of Last Incident, by Type of Incident, 1992 BCS</i>	p. 24
Table 2: <i>Location of Schools and Youthreach Centres in the Areas</i>	p. 91
Table 3: <i>Details of Participating Schools and Youthreach Centres</i>	p. 92
Table 4: <i>Schools and Youthreach Centres that Declined to Participate</i>	p. 94
Table 5: <i>Living Situation and Employment Levels in the Home</i>	p. 121
Table 6: <i>Types of Housing</i>	p. 122
Table 7: <i>Frequency of Family Victimisation</i>	p. 123
Table 8: <i>Frequency of Minor Victimisation Experiences</i>	p. 127
Table 9: <i>Frequency of Property Victimisation Experiences</i>	p. 128
Table 10: <i>Frequency of Violent Victimisation Experiences</i>	p. 130
Table 11: <i>Frequency of Vandalism Offending Behaviour</i>	p. 132
Table 12: <i>Frequency of Theft Offending Behaviour</i>	p. 133
Table 13: <i>Frequency of Violent Offending Behaviour</i>	p. 134
Table 14: <i>Incident that Bothered Young People the Most</i>	p. 135
Table 15: <i>Attitudes toward the Gardai</i>	p. 139
Table 16: <i>Week & Weekend Curfews</i>	p. 140
Table 17: <i>Free Time</i>	p. 141

LIST OF TABLES (continued)

Table 18: <i>Group differences between males and females for number of Victimization incidents</i>	p. 143
Table 19: <i>Group differences between males and females for number of Offending incidents</i>	p. 144
Table 20: <i>Group differences between males and females for Drug Use and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes</i>	p. 146
Table 21: <i>Differences between living with/not living with brother and Minor Victimization, Drug Use and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes</i>	p. 148
Table 22: <i>Differences between living with Mother/Father or not and Minor Victimization and Violent Offending</i>	p. 149
Table 23: <i>CFA and Model Fit Indices for Three Alternative Models of Victimization</i>	p. 171
Table 24: <i>Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for the Three Factors of the YVES</i>	p. 172
Table 25: <i>Correlations for the Three-Factor Model of the YVES</i>	p. 173
Table 26: <i>CFA and Model Fit Indices for Three Alternative Models of Offending</i>	p. 175
Table 27: <i>Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for the Three Factors of the YOBS</i>	p. 176
Table 28: <i>Correlations for the Three-Factor Model of the YOBS</i>	p. 177

LIST OF TABLES (continued)

Table 29: <i>Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for Negative Personal Safety Attitudes (NPSA), and Drug Use Behaviour</i>	p. 179
Table 30: <i>Standardized and unstandardized regression weights (with Standard Errors) for the YVES-based structural equation model of victimisation experiences</i>	p. 181
Table 31: <i>Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for Offending Behaviour, Victimization (Minor, Property, &Violent) and Drug Use</i>	p. 184
Table 32: <i>Standardized and unstandardized regression weights (with Standard Errors) for the direct model of Offending Behaviour</i>	p. 185
Table 33: <i>Standardized and unstandardized regression weights (with Standard Errors) for the Indirect Model of Offending Behaviour</i>	p. 187
Table 34: <i>Slang Term Meanings</i>	p. 197
Table 35: <i>Breakdown of Focus Group Participants by Age and School</i>	p. 199
Table 36: <i>Topics Discussed in all Focus Groups</i>	p. 201

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure A:** *Map of Dublin Postcodes* p. 90
- Figure B:** *Structural Equation Model of Victimisation* p. 178
- Figure C:** *Model 1 - Direct Structural Equation Model of Offending* p. 183
- Figure D:** *Model 2 - Indirect Structural Equation Model of Offending* p. 186

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis

1.1 Introduction: Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

This thesis aims to investigate the experiences of victimisation and offending among a sample of inner-city¹ Dublin youth². It is one of the first empirical investigations into youth victimisation in Ireland and is one of three research projects that were established under the *Youth Crime Research Project: Young People's Experiences of Crime*, at the Dublin Institute of Technology.

The primary aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the relationship between victimisation experiences and the development of offending behaviour. There were two main objectives of this research. The first objective was to develop a psychometrically valid and practically useful self-report measure of youth experiences, in order to explore the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending within inner-city Dublin. The second objective was to develop models to help identify the relevant factors in the prediction of youth victimisation and offending. The aims of the research, with accompanying key research questions, are expanded upon below:

1 To explore the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin

- a) What percentage of youth in the school sample have been victims?
- b) What type of victimisation are youth experiencing?
- c) What type of offending behaviour are youth taking part in?
- d) What are the main dynamics of youth victimisation and offending experiences?

¹ For the purposes of this study, 'inner-city Dublin' refers to a specific urban spatial environment that is geographically identifiable as the centre of Dublin (Dublin 1, 2, 7 & 8) and as such makes up a large part of the inner-city. The area as a whole is disadvantaged and the sample comes from lower socio-economic status backgrounds. However, it should be noted that this is a study of a place, not a study of the inner-city as a phenomenon.

² The definition of the term youth varies from country to country, depending on sociological, cultural, political, and economic factors. For the purposes of this study, youth will refer to those people under the age of 18, or in cases of specific research, young people of the age stated in the research.

2 *To develop an understanding of what factors predict victimisation experiences and offending behaviour among youth and what correlations exist between victims and offenders*

- a) What relevant factors lead to victimisation and offending behaviour?
- b) What relationships exist between victimisation experiences and offending behaviour?
- c) Which routine activities and lifestyle choices have a significant impact on victimisation and offending?
- d) What role does parental supervision play in determining youth victimisation and offending risk?
- e) What role does gender play in victimisation and offending?

The first aim is to analyse the extent and nature of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin. This analysis will incorporate schools and Youthreach centres located in Dublin 1, Dublin 2, Dublin 7, and Dublin 8. Both boys and girls will be included in this research, and the research will focus on 15-17 year olds. The second aim is to develop an understanding of what factors predict victimisation experiences and offending behaviour among youth and to identify correlations existing between victims and offenders. Existing relationships between victimisation and offending behaviour will be thoroughly investigated. Previous research has shown that victimisation is a strong indicator of likely participation in delinquent and criminal behaviour (McCord, 1979; Menard, 2002; Manasse & Ganem, 2009; Hartinger-Saunders, et al., 2011). However, many young people have been victimised, yet do not pursue a deviant lifestyle as a result, suggesting a strong similarity between victimogenic and criminogenic risk factors such as age and environment. For this reason, both groups hold an equal investigative importance for this study and have been included within this overall aim. The role parental supervision and routine activities/lifestyle choices play in determining the risk of victimisation and participation in offending behaviour will also be investigated. The control that guardians exert over youth is paramount in determining what type of lifestyle youth can pursue in the first place. Nevertheless, as youth cannot be supervised at all times, the

lifestyle choices they make, regardless of parental influence, must also be investigated. The number and types of friendships that youth have during their teenage years are an important aspect of youth lifestyle. Finally, the role gender plays in young people's experiences of crime and victimisation will be considered. Historically, youth crime research has focused more heavily on boys. Despite the fact that boys still experience the majority of the most serious victimisation incidents today, girls are experiencing high levels as well (Craig, et al., 2009). This research aims to investigate not only the overall experiences of both boys and girls, but also the differences between boys and girls experiences, with a particular focus on the non-sexual victimisation of girls, during the qualitative element of this research.

Progress has been made in increasing the amount of research and statistics on youth crime and victimisation in Ireland, particularly through research performed by the Irish Youth Justice Service, the CSO, and the National Crime Council. However, compared with other countries, youth policies are still being supported by limited research in the area, particularly where youth victimisation is concerned. This fact combined with the high levels of victimisation reported in other countries, makes the need for research on youth victimisation in Ireland clear. This piece of research could be instrumental in the future development of a nationwide self-report survey of youth experiences of crime in Ireland. It could also facilitate the implementation of intervention/victim support programmes designed specifically for youth.

1.2 Scope of the Study

Over the past thirty years, research has shown that youth experience victimisation at two to three times the rate of adults (Wells & Rankin, 1995). British research has revealed staggeringly high rates of victimisation among youth. For example, the MORI

Youth Survey 2002 revealed that 30 per cent of youth attending school had been victims of theft and 10 per cent had been physically assaulted, while approximately half the youth attending school and more than two-thirds of those excluded were reportedly victims of crime in the past year. Furthermore, in comparing youth and adult victimisation, it has been shown that youth are six times more likely than adults to have property stolen, three times more likely to have their property vandalised, and one and a half times as likely to be the victims of violence (Jubb, 2003).

American research has shown similar results to UK findings. During the period 1996-1997, American research showed that one out of every six youth aged 12-17 was the victim of a property crime, a rate that is 40 percent higher than the adult rate (Finkelhor & Ormond, 2000). Furthermore, according to the 2000 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), youth aged 12 through 17 had crime victimisation rates over two times higher than adults and constituted 23% of all violent crime victims. Similarly, the 2005 NCVS found that individuals aged 25 or older experienced lower victimisation rates than younger people (Catalano, 2006). In comparing rates of violent victimisations, the 2005 NCVS discovered that 12-15 year olds experienced 47 victimisations per 1000 persons, while 16-19 year olds experienced 45 victimisations per 1000 persons. Both of these rates were much higher than rates among older adults. In the 25-34 year old age group, 24 victimisations per 1000 persons were reported and 35-49 year olds experienced only 17 victimisations per 1000 persons (Catalano, 2006). The 2011 NCVS revealed the rate of violent victimisations for youth aged 12 through 17 increased from 28.1 victimisations per 1,000 in 2010 to 37.7 per 1,000 in 2011. As before, the rates were higher than those in the 25-34 year old age group, who experienced 29.7 (2010) and 26.5 (2011) victimisations per 1000 persons.

The problem that needs to be addressed, in the Irish context, is that though progress has been made in a broader sense, no studies have focused primarily on youth victimisation. In 2011 CSO population estimates revealed that 1,559,840 of the 4,588,252 people living in Ireland were under the age of 24, making up approximately 34% of the Irish population. With such a young population, that has risen and stabilised at a high rate over the last decade, there is no question that more youth crime research needs to be done in this country.

The research undertaken by the Youth Crime Research Group is at the forefront of research into youth crime in Ireland, providing the possibility of balance in the field, between studying both youth victims and offenders in this country. This study will fill a gap in knowledge through providing detailed statistics on youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin, which are currently limited.

1.3 Research Design Synopsis

This research consisted of both quantitative and qualitative elements. A localised victimisation survey was conducted, theoretical structural equation models were investigated, and focus groups were undertaken in order to explore the research aims.

The first quantitative element involved the use of a self-completion questionnaire, which was issued to a total of 421 young people in twelve schools and Youthreach centres located in inner-city Dublin. Young people aged 15-17 took part in this element of the research. The various types of victimisation explored were categorised into three broad themes: minor victimisation, property victimisation, and violent victimisation. Before the design of the research took place, a comprehensive review of similarly-focused youth victimisation research was conducted.

Studies of youth victimisation are similar in that they all ask questions regarding victimisation experiences, in some shape or form. However, they can often differ from one another in terms of focus areas, for example, previous large-scale youth studies in Ireland and the United Kingdom have focused on victimisation on a national level (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2010/2011; Crime and Victimisation Quarterly National Household Survey, 2010) and on bullying (Collins, McAleavy & Adamson, 2004; Minton, 2010; ISPC, 2011; EU Kids Online – Ireland Report).

The focus of this study differed from the large-scale studies mentioned above, in that it was a localised study, which examined six general topics, each of which was designed to explore youth victimisation and offending experiences in a broader sense. Students were asked to complete questionnaires that contained questions about background information, victimisation experiences, involvement in youth crime, how free time is spent, parental supervision, and factors that affect the daily lives of youth. The survey and its design will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The second quantitative element involved the theoretical investigation of structural equation models. First, a psychometrically valid and practically useful self-report measure of youth experiences was created, in order to explore the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending within inner-city Dublin. Second, structural equation models were developed and investigated in order to help identify the relevant factors in the prediction of youth victimisation and offending.

The qualitative element of this research explored the role gender plays in youth victimisation and offending risk. Focus groups were used to explore hypothesised increases in female victimisation and offending experiences, as well as to gain a better

understanding of their experiences overall. A total of 12 focus groups were performed in two schools. The schools were chosen based on their overall victimisation rates, which were the highest in their respective areas.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research paradigms were used in this research in order to ensure that both data and methodological triangulation took place. One of the strongest reasons for using triangulation is that it allows for the various dimensions of a phenomenon to be revealed through a more comprehensive and contextualized portrayal of it (Hilton, 2002). In terms of data improvements, triangulation has been credited with providing much more comprehensive data that is both richer and more authentic (Foss & Ellefsen, 2002; Halcomb & Andrews, 2005). The triangulated, two quantitative and one qualitative, elements of this research design come together to form an exploratory investigation of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin. As this research project is largely exploratory in nature, a range of methodological approaches was used in order to get the most comprehensive assessment of the factors affecting youth experiences. It is important to note that this project is more of a model generating thesis, instead of a model testing thesis, as there is not one coherent theory that the study neatly falls under. The goal is to explore as much as possible of what is going on amongst youth in this particular area of Dublin, so that hopefully theories can be built upon to explain this.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis contains a total of eleven chapters. Chapters 5 – 8 make up the quantitative element of this research, while Chapter 9 features both the methodology and findings for the qualitative element of the research.

The following chapter, Chapter 2, provides the first chapter of the literature review. In particular, the chapter provides the definition and scope of victimology and explores victim surveys in great detail. Not only does the chapter detail the various ways in which victim surveys are used, it also provides some of the reasons for and against their use, explores developmental victimology, and concludes with why victim surveys are one of the strongest methods to use in acquiring information about youth victimisation.

Chapter 3 follows with the second part of the literature review consisting of a review of youth crime research in Ireland and the UK. The chapter begins with an overview of youth crime in Ireland. It then moves on to reviewing youth victim research in the country, with a particular emphasis on the role of bullying studies in Ireland. The review of seminal British youth victimisation studies aimed to include the most influential works conducted in the UK that also have particular relevance for future Irish research. The chapter concludes with a review of current studies in the area and a summary of main findings.

Chapter Four details the theories that have influenced this research including: Social Control Theory, Lifestyle Theory, Rational Choice Theory, and Routine Activities Theory, Situational Crime Prevention, Strain Theory, Multiple and Repeat Victimisation Theory, and the Victim as Victimiser Theory. The ways in which these theories specifically relate to this research project are explored throughout the chapter. Specifically, the issue of parents and criminal friends and how they affect both victimisation and offending risk are explored, the idea that victimisation can lead to offending and other negative behaviours is considered, the link between victims and offenders is deciphered, and finally, theory is used to understand ways to reduce both victimisation risk and offending behaviour risk.

The survey research methodology is presented in Chapter 5 and includes information on the research design, participants, instruments and measures, procedures undertaken, and the various ethical considerations.

Chapter 6 details the survey findings and includes demographic information, frequency rates, youth opinions on their experiences, and differences. The chapter provides a detailed picture of what types of victimisation youth in inner-city Dublin are experiencing, as well as highlighting the most common types of offending perpetrated by these youth. It also highlights both how youth spend their free time and how both their routines activities and levels of parental supervision can affect their victimisation and offending risk.

Chapter 7 follows with a theoretical introduction to factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM). This chapter includes information on both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the five step process for Structural Equation Modelling, and the advantages and limitations of using SEM.

Chapter 8 provides analysis of both Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM procedures. This chapter features factor correlations and composite reliability scores for the Youth Victimisation Experience Scale (YVES) and the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS), as well as a detailed presentation and empirical investigation of Structural Equation Models for both Victimisation and Offending.

Chapter 9 features the qualitative element of this research in its entirety. It begins with the research design for this portion of the project and also includes information on the participants, procedures, and ethical and methodological issues. The chapter concludes with the detailed focus group findings.

The qualitative methodology and findings chapter is followed by Chapters 10-11, which provide a detailed discussion of the research findings, implications of the research findings, limitations of the research, and finally, recommendations for future research, and the contributions of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – Victimology and Victim Surveys

2.1 Introduction

As this is the first empirical investigation into youth victimisation in Ireland, additional information about victimology was provided in this chapter, in order to ground the research into the discipline as a whole. To this end, this chapter aims to provide a definition of and scope within victimology. A thorough discussion of victim surveys will also be provided, as they are the main tools used within victimological research.

2.2 Victimology – Definition and Scope

Victimology is still a relatively new discipline, one that has been influenced by several different theories, philosophies and movements through the years. In 1949, the term ‘victimology’ was coined by the American psychiatrist, Frederick Wertham. In his book *The Show of Violence*, Wertham stated:

The murder victim is the forgotten man. With sensational discussions on the abnormal psychology of the murderer, we have failed to emphasise the unprotectedness of the victim and the complacency of the authorities. One cannot understand the psychology of the murderer if one does not understand the sociology of the victim. What we need is a science of victimology (Wertham, in Fattah, 1997, p. 182).

In pragmatic terms, victimology can be defined as the study of victims. In this regard, the UN definition of victim is the most adequate. In 1985, the United Nations presented a comprehensive definition of ‘victim’ when discussing victims of crime. Under Article 1, of the United Nations *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*, the term ‘victims’ means “persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury,

emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States.” Article 2 goes on to state that “a person may be considered a victim, under this Declaration, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted and regardless of the familial relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. The term ‘victim’ also includes, where appropriate, the immediate family or dependants of the direct victim and persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimisation” (United Nations, 1985).

Though the UN definition is clearly concerned with victims of crime, there have been arguments supporting the study of victims remaining a concept within criminology, instead of victimology, as well as those advocating the incorporation of all forms of victimisation into victimological studies. Though some theorists such as Mendelsohn supported an expanded victimology, to incorporate the study of victims of, for example environmental disasters, the study of victims of crime remains the primary focus of victimology. The explanation for this restriction in scope is best summarised by Fattah.

In *Understanding Criminal Victimisation*, Fattah explains that:

As a scientific discipline, victimology has to define, specify, and delineate its subject. It has to delimit the frontiers of its scientific inquiry. And as a branch of criminology, victimology is interested primarily, though not exclusively, in criminal victimisation. Victimology has nothing to gain by cutting its ties to criminology and by extending its scope of inquiry to every conceivable kind, type, form, and variety of human victimisation. A breakaway from criminology and an extension of boundaries beyond the definable and the quantifiable present real dangers to the young and developing discipline of victimology (Fattah, 1991, p. 20).

All of the uncertainty surrounding what victimology actually is and how much scope it should have as a discipline has possibly hindered its' development. However, though it may seem as though time has been wasted debating these issues, it is important to remember that even these debates facilitate the rebalancing of crime research, to include the study of both offenders and victims.

2.3 The Emergence of Victimology

The emergence of victimology is typified by the manifestation of two different traditions. The first tradition emphasised the psychological characteristics and social circumstances of those individuals most likely to find themselves victims of crime and is closely identified by victim precipitation. The second tradition is primarily concerned with the measurement of hidden crime and is closely identified with the use of victim surveys (Tierney, 1996). In this section, the first tradition will be explored, with a particular focus on the works of some of the early victimologists: Von Hentig, Mendelsohn, Wolfgang, and Amir.

Victimology emerged from the seminal works of Hans von Hentig and Benjamin Mendelsohn during the 1940s and 1950s. Hans Von Hentig, Benjamin Mendelsohn, and Stephen Schafer are often thought of as the pioneers of victimology and are linked to one another through two prevalent themes found in the literature. The first of these themes is the use of victim typologies, and the second is the focus on the crime victims' contributions to the criminal acts in which they find themselves involved in, and thus, the furtherance of their own victimisations (Davies, Francis & Jupp, 1996). Generally, these contributions are discussed in terms of victim proneness, victim precipitation, and victim responsibility. Von Hentig and Mendelsohn, also known as the "fathers of

victimology”, explored the causes of victimisation in terms of victim proneness and victim precipitation, while Schafer focused on victim responsibility. In *The Victim and His Criminal*, Schafer (1977) examined the works of both Von Hentig and Mendelsohn. It has been claimed that Schafer wrote *The Victim and His Criminal* as a correction to Von Hentig’s *The Criminal and His Victim*.

Hans Von Hentig was primarily interested in turning the focus away from the offender and onto the victim. Through an interactionist approach, he set out not only to investigate the relationships between the “doer and sufferer”, but also to examine the attributes of victims which precipitated their suffering (Von Hentig, 1948). During his research, Von Hentig created a typology of victims which was based on risk factors, separated into three classes, and categorised by social, biological, and psychological factors. He considered victims as participants in crime, and his victim typologies led to certain individuals being classified as ‘victim prone.’ The suggestion that individuals may contribute to their own selection as victims through possessing certain personal characteristics can be seen throughout his victim typology. His work highlighted the fact that the relationships between victims and offenders are much more intricate than the rough classifications found within criminal law (Von Hentig, 1948).

Marvin E. Wolfgang undertook a study focusing on murders committed in Philadelphia, which also served as the first in-depth empirical investigation of ‘victim precipitation’. Wolfgang held the view that “except in cases in which the victim is an innocent bystander and is killed in lieu of an intended victim, or in cases in which a pure accident is involved, the victim may be one of the major precipitating causes of his own demise” (Wolfgang, 1958, p. 245). He characterised the role of victims in victim-precipitated homicides as being the first to resort to physical force against their ensuing

killer. His analysis covered all police-recorded homicides that occurred in the city between 1948 and 1952. Wolfgang did not study the offender or victim independent of one another, as if they were in a 'social vacuum'. In taking this approach to his research, he was able to highlight tendencies such as the victim and offender knowing each other previously, alcohol often being involved, the homicides being the end result of a series of previous arguments, and the characteristics of victims and offenders closely resembling each other (Wolfgang, 1958). His results revealed that 26% of the victims involved in his study were the first to use force in the altercation that escalated into the future homicide.

Benjamin Mendelsohn was a practising barrister and began his research with "a scientific method of study of a criminal case" (Mendelsohn, 1963, p. 239). In the course of his study, he interviewed not only the accused, but also, the victim, witnesses, and bystanders. He then issued a 300-question questionnaire that covered criminology and related sciences. He used this information to investigate the personalities and social relations of both the accused and the victim (Mendelsohn, 1963). He later created a typology that was similar to that of Von Hentig. However, he classified victims according to their responsibility for a crime occurring. The moralistic nature of his victim typology is very clear in his six distinct categories: the completely innocent victim, the victim with minor guilt, the victim who is as guilty as the offender, the victim more guilty than the offender, the most guilty victim, and the imaginary victim. Despite possible intentions otherwise, Mendelsohn's typology of victims was later translated as 'victim blaming', especially among feminists. To read more about the

criticisms surrounding victim blaming please see Walklate, 1989, 2012; and Morris, 1987.³

Menachem Amir (1971) took Wolfgang's model of victim precipitation and applied it to forcible rapes in Philadelphia. In doing so, he became responsible for one of the most controversial empirical analyses of rape. He took a situational approach to investigating rape, with a focus on what he termed 'precipitated rape'. This was defined by Amir as those circumstances where "the behaviour of the victim is interpreted by the offender as a direct invitation for sexual relations or as a sign that she will be available for sexual contact if he will persist in demanding it" (Amir, 1971, p. 261). He collected data on all 'forcible rape' cases recorded by the police, which occurred from 1958 to 1960 in Philadelphia. His findings revealed that 122 of the 646 'forcible rapes' in his study, or 19%, were victim precipitated. He concluded that:

These results point to the fact that the offender should not be viewed as the sole "cause" and reason for the offence, and that the "virtuous" victim is not always the innocent and passive party. Thus, the role played by the victim and its contribution to the perpetration of the offence becomes one of the main interests of the emerging discipline of victimology. Furthermore, if penal justice is to be fair it must be attentive to these problems of degrees of victim responsibility for her own victimisation (Amir, 1971, pp. 275-276).

Just as Mendelsohn had endured before him, Amir faced heavy criticism for 'victim blaming'. However, when one considers that there is a readily apparent undertone of

³ Though this dissertation did not deal with feminist critiques in detail, a starting point for gathering further information would be to see the following: Downes, D., & Rock, P. (2007), *Understanding Deviance*, (fifth edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press; Gelsthorpe, L. (2002). 'Feminism and criminology' in Maguire, M., Morgan, R., and Reiner, R. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, (third edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Wykes, M. & Welsh, K. (2009). *Violence, Gender and Justice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

the 'she asked for it' ideology in Amir's definition of the problem, this is not surprising.

Stephen Schafer's theory of functional responsibility was largely shaped by the works of Von Hentig and Mendelsohn. However, his work sharply diverged from Von Hentig's in the classification of victims; instead of basing the classifications on risk factors, Schafer based them on responsibility. It was his belief that a victim could contribute to either the creation or performance of a crime through acts of negligence, precipitation, or provocation (Schafer, 1977). His theory of "functional responsibility" involved victims taking an active role in the prevention of their victimisation, primarily by avoiding the provocation of a criminal act. His victim typology was "based on the idea of who is responsible for what and to what extent" (Schafer, 1977, p. 45). The victim typology that he proposed followed his guidelines of having both a 'responsibility-guiding application' and a link to a theoretical model. His typology consisted of Unrelated Victims, Provocative Victims, Precipitative Victims, Biologically Weak Victims, Socially Weak Victims, Self-Victimising Victims, and Political Victims (Schafer, 1977).

Despite being criticised for their lack of empirical basis and insensitivity towards victims, the seminal works of the 'pioneers of victimology' have greatly influenced the field of victimology and continue to be influential today. Walklate (2007) has stated that "ideas about victim precipitation have resurfaced in other guises in recent periods, principally under the banner of situational crime prevention and repeat victimisation, and have, through these channels, gained a degree of respectability" (p.12). Both situational crime prevention and repeat victimisation will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Now that a pragmatic definition and scope within victimology as a discipline has been decided upon, and the emergence of victimology has been covered, developmental victimology will be explored. This exploration will provide a good foundation to understanding some of the complexities involved with researching young people.

2.4 Developmental Victimology

Developmental victimology identifies factors that influence youth victimisation risk and explores various difficulties that child victims face, which can provide valuable insight into their plight. Developmental victimology could be seen as a natural starting point for the study of youth victimisation. David Finkelhor, who is on the forefront of the advancement of the developmental victimology perspective, defines developmental victimology as “the study of victimisation across the changing phases of childhood and adolescence” (1995, p.178). He explains that all of the constant changes that occur during childhood can affect victimisation risk (Finkelhor, 1995). Developmental victimology is based on the notion that individual ideas and theories are not enough to successfully study such an all-encompassing field. In dealing with any developmental theory, it is important to address the common underlying basis. Developmental theorists within the realms of criminology are not in favour of accepting a single theory to explain victimisation, crime or delinquency and propose that several theories are needed in order to address the explanation of these events over the life course.

Finkelhor (1997) describes ‘developmental victimology’ as a framework that enables the victimisation of children to be studied across the span of childhood. In discussing what can be learned from child development, he states that:

Much theory in the field of child development can be applied to child victimisation. Even in its methodology, which has relied heavily on observational studies and longitudinal follow-up studies, victimology can learn valuable lessons (Finkelhor, 1995, p. 189).

During childhood, children experience many changes both within themselves and within their environment. For example, their bodies grow and become stronger, their mental capabilities expand, and their relationships and social environments often become more complex (Finkelhor, 1995). When one takes into account even these few examples, the importance of the developmental perspective becomes clear.

Children obviously continue to experience changes during adolescence, which is why an understanding of 'developmental victimology' is an integral part of the study of youth victimisation. It is also important to recognize the differences in victimisation experiences among children, according to age groups. These differences can indicate possible trends in future victimisation experiences, as well as variations in types of victimisations according to age. As Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman (1994) explain:

....victimisations stemming from the dependent status of children should be most common among the most dependent, hence the youngest, children. A corollary is that as children grow older, their victimisation profile should more and more resemble that of adults (p. 178).

The dependent status of children is one of the factors that can increase victimisation risk. This increased risk could apply to children belonging to all age groups. For example, younger children are often more vulnerable to becoming victims of kidnappings. This vulnerability is due to their lack of ability to fight back, combined with their difficulty in identifying dangerous situations. On the other hand, older children are often more vulnerable to verbal and physical assaults. Older children's vulnerability is affected by their inability to choose both who they associate with and

where they spend the majority of their time (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994). Young people spend most of their childhoods in school, making it difficult to avoid individuals that are responsible for their victimisation. Similarly, other factors are responsible for the development of criminal behaviour amongst youth. Truancy, conflict in the family, and parenting have all been identified as factors that influence the development of children, in particular, the development of adolescent delinquency and criminal behaviour (Farrington, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002; Farrington & West, 1993; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Graham & Bowling, 1995; Graham & Utting, 1996; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Piquero et al., 2003).

In addition to identifying the dependent status of young people as a factor that influences youth victimisation risk, and some of the factors that influence delinquency risk, it is also helpful to explore the various difficulties that child victims face. In their research into victims of crime, Morgan and Zedner (1992) have highlighted some of the difficulties child victims can face, including regular acts of minor violence which are not defined as criminal acts, higher rates of victimisation, and the status of victim having to be 'earned' before any action can be taken on the victim's behalf. These difficulties, coupled with the fact that young people are often not in the position to deal with the aftermath of victimisation on their own, can result in the plight of the youth victim being even more difficult than that of their adult counterpart. This is in direct contrast to the findings of Garofalo et al. (1987) who concluded that "generally, victimisation of juveniles tends to be less serious than victimisation of adults..." (p. 336).

Other research has highlighted some of the difficulties in acquiring empirical evidence used to establish victimisation risk patterns. Finkelhor, Ormrod and Turner (2009)

have stated that the establishment of definitive empirical evidence to support victimisation risk patterns over the course of childhood is confounded by a number of problems, including: the fragmentation of the study of victimization into subtopics, the use of overly age-restrictive methodologies to assess victimisation patterns, and reporting and identification biases being commonplace amongst information sources used to determine developmental victimisation risk patterns. The fragmentation of the study of child and youth victimisation is particularly important to this study, as the ever-changing focus of subtopics in the area creates confusion whilst analysing data and leads to difficulties for comparative work. Studies are often investigating the same topics but their focus on a particular area such as child sexual abuse or bullying means that interesting findings can easily be overlooked.

Now that the first of the two traditions marking the emergence of victimology has been described, along with Developmental Victimology, this chapter will turn to the exploration of the second tradition, exploring the use of victim surveys in attempting to quantify hidden crime.

2.5 Victims Surveys in Brief

2.5.1 Introduction

The ‘dark figure’ of crime is a concept that has received a lot of attention within criminological circles. Generally speaking, the crimes that are not recorded, coupled with those that are not reported, make up what is known as the ‘dark figure’ of crime. Within the discipline, the ‘dark figure’ can actually be thought of in two different ways. First, the term can refer to the large number of crimes that are virtually unknown as a result of high numbers of incidents that are unreported and thus unrecorded. Second,

the term can refer to the imagery that comes to mind when one thinks of these undetected, unreported, unrecorded offences and the perpetrator of these incidents.

Coleman and Moynihan explain further:

Although not often recognized, the notion of the dark figure is ambiguous: it can refer to that vast *number* of unrecorded crimes and criminals (the conventional usage), or it can refer to our *picture* or *imagery* of the undetected offender and her/his offences. It can thus be used in a quantitative (numerical) or a qualitative (pictorial) sense, or in a way that combines both aspects. For many years, little was known about these dark figures, which have haunted the discipline of criminology throughout its short history. Few, if any, denied the presence of a dark figure in their midst; the differences came in the responses to its presence (1996, p. 3).

The 'dark figure' will not be used as, or investigated further, in a qualitative sense. Alternatively, the focus throughout this research will be on its quantitative meaning, specifically, the introduction of victim surveys and their role in attempting to quantify the 'dark figure of crime'. Victim surveys were first introduced to the field approximately forty years ago. The logic behind their use was to attempt to circumvent some of the deficiencies found within the crime recording process, including not being able to identify how much crime actually occurs and why crimes are or are not reported, through directly questioning the victim. These surveys have helped to illuminate the 'dark figure' of crime by ascertaining individual's victimisation experiences, while allowing for the simultaneous collection of relevant information regarding their own criminality levels and faith in the criminal justice system.

Generally speaking, victim surveys are used to show how often people become victims of crime and how often incidents are reported to the police. They also provide data on victims and offenders, as well as on the incidents themselves. Victim surveys provide information about which crimes are most often reported to the police, which crimes are

most often not reported to the police, and the possible reasons for both. The following section will provide a detailed discussion of how victim surveys are used.

2.5.2 How Victim Surveys Are Used

Victim surveys can provide researchers with an enormous amount of data that can be used for several different purposes. They are also useful in providing researchers with insightful information about victims and victimisation, which was previously hard to come by, particularly when researchers only had access to official data. Walklate (1989) has noted that the introduction of the victimisation survey in the 1960s marked the end to researchers' complete dependence on the government for the provision of officially recorded statistics. This newfound independence spawned a new focus for researchers. Soon after their introduction, victim surveys became the new method of choice for researchers trying to discover the 'true levels of crime'.

When discussing the use of victim surveys, it is important to highlight some of the factors that are fundamental to their effectiveness. Victim surveys rely on a number of stages to take place in order for them to be carried out to a successful completion. First, victims must perceive an incident as victimisation. It is becoming increasingly common for individuals, especially young people, to consider situations where they have been victimised as commonplace, instead of recognizing events as victimisation. This trend is often seen when young people are questioned regarding their reasons for not wanting to report an incident and/or when questioned concerning the seriousness of the incident in question. In *Young People, Victimisation and the Police*, Maung discovered this trend when asking young people about the seriousness of incidents. She asked youth whether an incident was a crime, or "whether it was 'wrong but not a

crime’ or whether it was ‘just something that happens’” (Maung, 1995, p. 7). Her findings are displayed in the following table:

Table 1: *Seriousness of Last Incident, by Type of Incident, 1992 BCS*

	Theft of Personal Property	Theft from Person	Assault	Harassment By Youth	Harassment By Adults	All Incidents
<i>Percentage of Incidents Judged:</i>						
A Crime	39%	60%	12%	9%	24%	24%
Wrong	26%	16%	32%	39%	33%	31%
Just Something That Happens	26%	15%	46%	44%	33%	36%
Not Sure	10%	9%	10%	8%	11%	9%

(Maung, 1995, p. 61)

Secondly, the victim must remember the incident accurately. This is not as easy as it may seem, especially if the incident is not reported to the police. Typically, the dates of incidents that are reported to the police are more easily remembered than those of un-reported incidents. Since more serious crimes are often the ones that are reported to the police, this means that it is that much more difficult for a person to remember an incident that may be considered trivial in their minds.

Finally, individuals have to be willing and able to participate in the survey. Willingness is determined before the survey gets under way, but the researcher still has to consider issues such as individuals changing their minds about participation, absenteeism, difficulties in locating or relocating part of the sample, and individuals refusing to take part in particular sections of the survey. In addition to considering

these issues, it is essential for the researcher to consider the ages and backgrounds of those to be surveyed, especially when surveying young people. There may be a wide range of abilities among young people, depending on factors such as whether or not they dropped out of school and their literacy levels. Adjustments may need to be made to the survey design and data collection methods, depending on the age and literacy level of the samples to be used in the study.

The completion of all of these stages facilitates the successful completion of the victim survey, after which, a wealth of data is made readily available to the researcher. The wealth of data produced is only one of many reasons that victim surveys are used. There are also reasons not to use of this type of survey. In the following sections, reasons for and against the use of victim surveys will be discussed.

2.5.3 Reasons for the Use of Victim Surveys

There are many reasons for the use of victim surveys. General reasons for the use of victim surveys were provided in previous sections. More specific uses of both victimisation surveys and the data that results from them were uncovered in *Surveying Victims*. In this piece of work, the authors investigated why crime should be measured, the uses of victimisation surveys, and the possible uses of victimisation survey data. Some of the most relevant reasons given in the research (Sparks et al., 1977, p. 223) are summarised as follows:

1. A more accurate estimate of the 'true' crime rate can be provided through the use of victimisation survey data, alleviating the pressure that using an over/under-estimated crime rate as a 'social barometer' may cause.
2. Victimisation surveys could be used for crime prevention evaluations and as an alternative data source for a more accurate measure for theories of crime that use the crime rate as their dependent variable.

3. Victim surveys can perform important social functions such as investigating attitudes and responses to, and the consequences of, crime for individuals and society, as well as focusing attention on the plight of the victim.

The above reasons are applicable to all types of victimisation surveys. However, there are also specific reasons for the use of youth victimisation surveys and questionnaires. In terms of youth victimisation surveys, Hamby and Finkelhor have provided a good resource for researchers who wish to use child victimisation questionnaires. They provide a review of some good examples of these questionnaires and also give guidelines for selecting victimisation questionnaires, in terms of what the researcher wants to accomplish. In *Choosing and Using Child Victimization Questionnaires*, Hamby and Finkelhor (2001) also list benefits to using victimisation questionnaires including:

1. Self-report questionnaires capture many victimisations that are never reported to child protection agencies or the police, making their use preferable to the use of official records.
2. Reluctance of victims to bring up the issue on their own.
3. The normative data within self-report questionnaires allows for comparisons with other populations of youth or other groups.

In addition to these reasons supporting the use of victim surveys, there are also reasons against their use. In the following section, some reasons against using victim surveys will be discussed, along with some of the methodological difficulties involved with their use.

2.5.4 Reasons Against the Use of Victim Surveys

Surveying victims is an involved process. There are many issues that come up during the design, data collection, and data analysis stages. One reason against using self-

administered questionnaires is that the amount of information that can be obtained about particular incidents is limited. Hamby and Finkelhor (2001) explain:

Self-administered questionnaires are often limited in the amount of information they can obtain on specific incidents because follow-up questions, which often need to be tailored to an individual's responses, can easily lead to a dizzyingly complex pattern of skipping among questions (p. 7).

In addition to this example, more general reasons against the use of victimisation surveys are closely tied to methodological problems. However, it is important to note that some of these problems are not due to the inefficiency of the method, but rather, the method not being suitable for the examination of certain crimes.

First, victim surveys are unable to measure crimes that do not have individual victims or do not have victims who will be labelled as such. For example, victim surveys are worthless in terms of determining white-collar crime and can be of little use in cases of domestic abuse, where the individual cannot yet accept and/or will not admit that they are, in fact, a victim. Victim surveys do not provide data on victimless crimes, such as public intoxication, prostitution, drug offences or gambling either (Mayhew, 1996). It is clear that victim surveys are most effective at measuring property crimes and crimes with identifiable victims.

Secondly, methodological problems that are common in the use of victim surveys include both the researcher having to learn whether or not a victim is telling the truth and participant memory recall. The problem in these cases is that an individual may honestly believe that they are telling the truth, but they may actually be including a victimisation that occurred before the designated timeframe or may be leaving out some vital information. Other problems arise with the issues of concealment and fabrication.

Fortunately, the types of crime most likely to be affected by concealment are known to researchers. These crimes include sexual offences and domestic violence, along with ‘non-stranger’ crimes (Coleman & Moynihan, 1996). Unfortunately, much less is known about the fabrication issues, or rather, the crimes that are most likely to be affected by it. However, researchers should be aware of respondents who seem too eager to help and samples that may be more affected by a fear of disappointing the researcher, such as young people (Junger-Tas & Marshall, 1999).

A further issue that must be considered is the inclusion of non-criminal events in victimisation surveys. Obviously, there is no way to measure these events against police reports, as police reports are not made for items that are not considered crimes. However, there is still a strong justification for their inclusion in victimisation surveys. In fact, examples of ‘indirect victimisation’ such as fear or worry about crime may affect victims as harshly as a direct victimisation experience. In dealing with young teenagers ‘worry about crime’ Hartless et al. explains that it is deservedly considered a form of indirect victimisation as it “can affect lifestyle, circumscribe social activities and impair feelings of safety in ways no less severe or long lasting than direct crime victimisation” (1995, p. 117). When experiences of ‘indirect victimisation’ are looked at in this manner, it is unmistakable why their inclusion in victimisation surveys should be considered by researchers.

Finally, victim surveys are also criticised for their inability to measure the seriousness of offences with any level of precision. However, Mawby tackles this criticism by explaining that:

Criminal law is, in most respects, founded on the categorization of acts in terms of “what takes place” rather than “how much harm is done,” and the recognition that offences are against the state to some extent undermines the importance of the offence to the victim (Mawby 1979, p. 111).

These are the most common criticisms and methodological issues concerning victim surveys. Being aware of their existence and taking steps to avoid them (where possible) are an important part of the research process.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a basis for the understanding of victimology and the implications developmental victimology has for this study. The definition and scope of the field were defined and the use of victim surveys was discussed with some of the methodological problems and difficulties in mind. The following chapter will provide insight into young people’s experiences of crime in Ireland and will highlight some of the most influential British youth victimisation studies, providing a historical context and an empirical basis.

Chapter 3: Literature Review - Youth Research in Ireland and the United Kingdom

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on young people's experiences of crime in Ireland and the United Kingdom. The chapter will begin with an overview of crime research in Ireland. There has been a particular dearth of research in regards to victimisation studies in this country. In particular, there is not sufficient research coverage of youth studies, independent of adult studies, in terms of both crime and victimisation research. The inclusion of a review of research involving adults will help to highlight the fact that more crime and victimisation research in Ireland needs to be performed and will also underscore the scarcity of youth-focused research, as in many cases, the adult research is being included, simply because there is not comparable youth research to review.

Bullying studies and British crime research are being included for similar reasons. Much of the research on youth in Ireland has been performed in the context of bullying (Columbus, 2010; Midthassel et al., 2009; Minton & O' Moore, 2008; O'Moore, 2010). Bullying studies are the most frequently performed youth studies in Ireland. This is likely due to a combination of factors including: a considerable amount of research funding dedicated to the issue, strong public interest, and bullying being an emotive topic. Bullying also provides a good starting point for youth victimisation research in this country. Reviewing British youth crime research will provide context to studies being performed in Ireland. Since there are so many similarities between the two

countries, expectations that similar findings would be revealed in both countries are justified.

3.2 Young People's Experiences of Crime in Ireland

3.2.1 Crime in Ireland: An Overview

Today, crime in Ireland is getting more attention than it has received in the past. Crime rates, reports, and studies are regularly featured in academic, political, and media circles. Recent examples of victimisation research in Ireland include the 2010 *Crime and Victimisation Quarterly National Household Survey*, *Fear of Crime in Ireland and the Impact on Quality of Life* (2009), *The Needs and Concerns of Victims of Crime in Ireland* (2009) and the TNS/MRBI nationwide survey (2005) that was conducted on behalf of Fine Gael. Other examples of research on crime in Ireland include: *Crime in Ireland 1945-95 – Here Be Dragons* (Brewer, Lockhart & Rodgers, 1997), *Crime Victimisation in Dublin* (O'Connell & Whelan, 1994), *Crime Victimisation in Dublin Revisited* (Kirwan & O'Connell, 2001), *The Volume of Crime in Ireland – Crime Surveys and Official Figures* (O'Connell, 2000), *Crime Victimisation in the Republic of Ireland* (Breen & Rottman, 1985), and *Crime in Ireland* (Young, P., O'Donnell, I. & Clare, E. 2001).

Since 1947, Garda Annual Reports have been the major source on crime in Ireland (McCullagh, 1996). However, during the 1980s, some of the first data on criminal victimisation in Ireland was collected by insurance companies and marketing groups. In fact, the Irish Marketing Survey (IMS) undertook one of the first victimisation surveys in Ireland, in 1983.

Crime Victimization in the Republic of Ireland (Breen & Rottman, 1985) was a pioneering study. The study sought to discover the level of crime victimisation in Ireland, to provide a comparative perspective of Irish crime levels (particularly against levels found within the UK) and finally, to create a picture of who is most at risk of victimisation. Breen and Rottman (1985) found an overall offence rate of 34 incidents per 100 households and an overall victimisation rate of 19 per 100 households. They also effectively highlighted the number of incidents exceeding the number of victims for each of the six crimes that were covered, leading to the conclusion that particular households were more prone to experiencing multiple victimisations than others.

Crime in Ireland: Trends and Patterns 1950 to 1998 (Young, O'Donnell & Clare, 2001) was paramount to the creation of the National Crime Victimization Survey (QNHS). The National Crime Council recommended that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform commission a National Crime Victimization Survey. The Council based this recommendation on the *Crime in Ireland* study. The design of the questionnaire was a joint effort between the Economic and Social Research Institute and the Institute of Criminology at UCD. However, it should be noted that this national survey did not focus on youth and only asked heads of household about victimisation experienced by youth of a particular age, who were living in the home. Sexual assaults and incidents of a domestic nature were not covered by the survey either.

National Crime Victimization Survey: Quarterly National Household Survey (CSO). The first questions regarding crime and victimisation in Ireland were published in 1999, as part of the September to November 1998 Crime and Victimization Survey: Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS). These questions revealed that approximately one out of every hundred persons aged 18 or over had been a victim of non-violent theft,

that 5% of households had experienced vandalism in the past year, and that young adults (18-24) were the most at risk (CSO, 1999). These questions were useful in trying to get a picture of the nature of crime in Ireland. Since 1998, the CSO has performed three other National Crime and Victimization Surveys (QNHS). The first of these surveys was performed in 2003. The next survey was performed in 2006, and the most recent survey was performed in 2010.

As part of the QNHS, 39,000 households were surveyed by the CSO, in 2006. Findings revealed that approximately 4.6% of respondents had been victims of crime in the last 12 months. Findings revealed that 48% of assaults, 40% of thefts, and 30% of burglaries went unreported, despite the fact that the majority of these crimes were reported to An Garda Síochána.

In terms of prevalence rates, the CSO Crime and Victimization surveys indicate that young adults, particularly those between 18-24 have the highest risk of becoming crime victims. In 2006, 91,800 males versus 58,900 females reported being victims of crime. The 18-24 year old age group experienced the most victimisation. However, fear of crime and fear of becoming a crime victim were most prevalent amongst women and older adults. CSO figures also revealed that of those over the age of 65, 45% would feel unsafe in their area after dark. Furthermore, 1 in 10 women and 1 in 40 men would feel unsafe or very unsafe in their homes after dark. Additionally, one in nine young women aged 18-24 years old would feel unsafe or very unsafe alone at home at night. Finally, those in rural areas were less than half as likely to experience property crime than those in urban areas. In general, those living in rural localities are at less risk of experiencing criminal behaviour than those living in urban areas, particularly Dublin.

The next National Crime and Victimization Survey (QNHS) in Ireland was conducted by the Central Statistics Office in 2010. The 2010 survey featured reductions in several types of crime from 2006: property crime (9% down from 11%), personal crime (4% down from 5%), and theft without violence (2% down from 3%). Worry about becoming a victim of crime decreased substantially as well (40% down from 53%). This was an interesting finding, as 83% of respondents also reported that crime in Ireland was either a serious or very serious problem. It should be noted, however, that there was not a substantial change in this regard since 2003, when 81% responded in this manner, in addition to 58% reporting worry about becoming a victim of crime in the same year. Unsurprisingly, Dublin had the highest rate of property crime (12%) compared with the lowest rate (6%) found in the Border, West, and South-West. Urban households also had a 50% higher chance of experiencing vandalism than their rural counterparts (5% versus 2%). There was no change in gender for personal crime victimization, with both males and females experiencing 4%. However, there were substantial differences in feelings of safety after dark both between genders and age groups, with 35% of females versus 16% of males reporting feeling unsafe or very unsafe, and 21% of 18-24 year olds versus 44% of 65+ year olds reporting feeling unsafe or very unsafe. As in the BCS findings, vandalism was reported repeatedly and often, with 26% of households reporting repeat vandalism experiences. When assaults were reported, they tended to be serious, with 60% of them resulting in injuries and 12% requiring medical attention.

Finally, in terms of incidents being reported to the Gardaí, assaults were not reported in 45% of cases and thefts without violence were not reported in 37% of cases. The CSO have suggested that there is a direct link between how serious individuals perceive the

offence to be, financial losses, and whether or not the victim thinks the Gardaí can or will do anything about the crime, and whether individuals report crimes to the Gardaí.

3.2.2 Irish Youth Victim Research and the Role of Bullying Studies

There have not been any studies exploring the various types of victimisation that youth might experience in Ireland to date. However, there have been several studies that have examined young people's experiences with bullying (Columbus, 2010; Midthassel, Minton, & O' Moore, A.M., 2009; Minton & O' Moore, 2008; O'Moore, 2010), which can be considered a type of victimisation.

'Bullying' can be defined as psychological, verbal, and physical attacks that are intended to induce fear and harm upon the victim (Farrington, 1993). Bullying is often seen as a problem with many facets. Besag (1995) proposes the following four facets to the problem of bullying, each of which provides interesting insight into the problem:

1. It may be verbal, physical or psychological in nature.
2. It may be in the form of a socially acceptable behaviour, as in a highly competitive approach to academic, sporting or social success, which, by intent, makes others feel inferior or causes distress.
3. It is necessarily a repetitive attack which causes distress not only at the time of each attack, but also by the threat of future attacks.
4. It is characterized by the dominance of the powerful over the powerless in whatever context. (p.4)

Olweus (1989) added an interesting element to his definition of bullying, by including a provision of what bullying is not – the occasional fight or quarrel between young people of about the same strength. There is often the presence of a power imbalance among bullies and their victims, physical and/or emotional, which lends truth to the idea that they are members of two separate groups. However, this is unlike other

examples of victimisation, where the victims and offenders are often members of the same group.

Bullying can take place anywhere, but young people usually experience bullying at school. Farrington (1993) explains that the less powerful are attacked by the more powerful in locations where adults are not present. In the school setting, there are many areas where the eyes and ears of school staff simply cannot reach. The classroom, playground, corridors, and cafeteria are just a few examples of areas that staff might find difficult to monitor, increasing the risk of bullying behaviour occurring there. Commonly, there can also be a marked difference between where younger and older children experience bullying. According to the Nationwide Study on Bullying Behaviour in Irish Schools (O'Moore, Kirkham & Smith, 1997), 27% of post-primary school students and 74% of primary school students reported experiencing bullying in the playground, versus 47% and 31% respectively in the classroom. Furthermore, the study found that while only 8.8% of post-primary school children experienced bullying on their way to and from school, 19% of primary school children reported the same. There are also differences amongst which children report being bullied at school, as reported in the *State of the Nation's Children* (2012). This study revealed that 24.3% of children aged 10-17 in Ireland reported being bullied at school in 2010, at least once over the last couple of months. Though there were no Irish regional differences reported, there were statistically significant differences reported amongst children, with Traveller children, immigrant children, and children with a disability and/or chronic illness more likely to report that they were bullied at school (7.5%, 5.7% and 6% respectively) more often than all other children. Observed differences across age and gender were also statistically significant, with a lower percentage of older children and girls reporting being bullied.

The Nationwide Study on Bullying Behaviour in Irish Schools is only one of several large-scale bullying studies carried out in Ireland. O'Moore and Hillery (1989) is an example of a cross-national study and examples of recent large-scale studies that contain bullying as an element include: *Irish Health Behaviours in School-Aged Children Study* (2010) and the *State of the Nation's Children* (2012) mentioned previously.

Despite the prevalence of urban studies of bullying, rural studies have also taken place in Ireland, emphasising the fact that bullying is not just an urban phenomenon. In 1995, Byrne put the Irish problem as a whole in perspective:

To put a human face on this, it is estimated that there are about 900,000 school pupils in Ireland at the moment. That means that up to 90,000 of them could be involved as either bullies or victims not just in isolated incidents, but rather in the systematic, on-going pattern of behaviour. This constitutes a major problem (p. 21).

Despite being such a large problem, bullying research in this country is still quite limited, particularly bullying research that does not involve cyber-bullying or focus mainly on what to do when bullying happens. More research is needed in the realm of quantifying the nature and extent of the problem and focusing on how to prevent bullying in the first place. Thankfully, research has shown that bullying does decrease with age. Despite being British, research undertaken by Green, Collingwood and Ross (2010) is included here as it is an example of bullying research that highlights victimisation of a bullying nature that has particular relevance to this study. In their research, using data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), they discovered that victimisation of this type decreased over age, with 47% of youth reporting being bullied at age 14, dropping to 29% at age 16. Prevalence rates of different types of bullying were found to be similar to overall bullying with all types

decreasing with age. Name calling was the most common type of bullying reported at age 14 (31%). The reporting of this type of bullying had dropped by approximately 50% by the age of 16 to 15%. Being threatened with violence was reported by 20% of 14 year olds and dropped to 13% at age 16. Prevalence levels for violence and social exclusion were quite similar, with reporting rates of 18% at age 14, dropping to 10% at age 16. Differences in experiences of boys and girls also appeared to disappear with age, with girls reporting more bullying at ages 14-15, and this difference disappearing by age 16, bringing the girls back in line with the boys. The researchers did highlight the fact that girls tended to report more incidents of psychological bullying (name calling and exclusion), while boys reported more bullying of a physical nature (threats and violence).

An interesting finding was that bullying was not found to be linked to social position. In fact, the researchers found evidence to support the opposite of what might be expected, with youth with better-educated mothers being more likely to be bullied rather than those whose mothers did not have any qualifications. Other differences in the experiences of boys and girls related to the type of school that they attended, with boys reporting more bullying at all-boys schools than mixed schools, as opposed to girls reporting less bullying at all-girls schools than mixed schools.

The researchers also discovered that youth whose parents also reported that they were being bullied were more likely to break away from bullying by the age of 16, suggesting that “parental awareness may be a key factor in helping these young people to escape being bullied” (Green, Collingwood & Ross, 2010, p. 11). Youth who were not living with their biological parents (those living as part of a step-family), were more likely to experience bullying, particularly bullying of a violent nature, with those

living with a single parent or with neither biological parent also reporting higher levels of bullying, albeit at lower levels than those living as part of a step-family.

The prevalence of bullying in schools and some of the bullying-related victimisation trends have been firmly established by the research mentioned above. However, it is worth considering how continuous research into bullying behaviour affects the future for youth victimisation research in Ireland. Based on the research that has been carried out to date, it is arguable that bullying research is taking precedent over more general victimisation research. Whether this is due to the fact that much of youth victimisation is tantamount to bullying behaviour is debatable. Until levels of overall youth victimisation have been identified, where future research should be focused will remain uncertain. In the meantime, the goal should be to continue researching all types of youth victimisation.

Since Irish youth victimisation research has been focused on bullying, researchers will have to rely on the trends that have been developing in the United Kingdom and further afield, until more research has been done into other forms of youth victimisation in this country. The following section will review some of the youth victimisation statistics found in other countries, in order to provide an idea of the findings that could be discovered in Ireland. Looking at the trends in the United Kingdom is particularly helpful, considering the similarities between the two countries and their relative proximity.

3.3 A Review of Seminal Youth Victimization Studies

3.3.1 Introduction

Youth victimisation surveys have been undertaken across the globe, but for the purpose of this study, only notable studies carried out in the United Kingdom will be reviewed⁴ in detail, while international studies will only be reviewed at a more general level. One of the main reasons for this is the difficulties involved with comparing data and measures, particularly at an international level, as Enzmann et al. explain “our attempts to compare ISRD-2, ICVS and ESB data on three specific offences (robbery/extortion, assault and theft), illustrate, once again, the enormous challenges associated with trying to disentangle – at the international level – the (possible) convergence of different measures of crime” (p. 178). Furthermore, reviewing studies undertaken in the United Kingdom will more than suffice in creating a picture of what might be found in Ireland, due to the two countries similar demographics and social structures, as well as their geographical proximity. Since studies focusing exclusively on youth victimisation have not taken place in Ireland to date, it is helpful to look at studies that have been done in the United Kingdom, in hopes of learning from them and designing an Irish survey according to the methods, practices and procedures that were most effective in such a comparable country. Similarly, attempts will be made to avoid the pitfalls and problems found within these studies.

⁴ It should be noted that international youth victimisation surveys were analysed during the early stages of research to gain a better understanding of survey research methodologies and various victimisation rates. However, they were not reviewed in detail here, in the same manner as the UK surveys, for two additional reasons. Firstly, international surveys and even large-scale national surveys are not helpful in conducting a localized study, as they are designed to represent international/national populations, not localized ones. Secondly, data gleaned from these types of surveys cannot be used to monitor policy innovations, whereas localized surveys can be conducted before and after policy changes in an area to do just that. This ability is of particular use to this study.

As with many countries in the world, the majority of research in the UK has focused on young offenders, not youth victims. However, the first step toward changing this trend occurred in 1979, with Mawby's comparative study of two Sheffield schools. In studying 11 – 15 year olds at these schools, he discovered that 67% had been a victim of crime and that 25% had suffered a physical assault (Mawby, 1979). Despite these alarming findings, youth victimisation did not attract a great deal of attention until the 1990s. The first noteworthy study during this decade was Anderson, Kinsey, Loader and Smith's ground-breaking project, *Cautionary Tales: Young People, Crime and Policing in Edinburgh*.

In addition, to the abovementioned studies there are also some pioneering studies that merit attention. These studies include both local youth studies and studies done on a national level, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.3.2 The Victimisation of Juveniles: A Comparative Study of Three Areas of Publicly Owned Housing in Sheffield

In 1979, Mawby was involved in the first study of youth victimisation in the United Kingdom. In fact, the only other related-study during this time was Sparks et al. *Surveying Victims*, which was published in 1977 but did not focus on juveniles. Mawby's study was part of a larger study entitled the *Sheffield Study of Urban Social Structure and Crime*. The juvenile study took samples from three Sheffield council estates that were in close proximity to one another. The estates were predominantly working-class, which was not representative of Sheffield. The aim of the study was to determine the rates of juvenile victimisation in this particular area and whether they had

been underestimated, as well as determining how pronounced the differences in victimisation rates were among juveniles in the three estates (Mawby, 1979).

The sample of juveniles was taken from two schools in Sheffield, where the vast majority of juveniles from each of the three estates attended. The questionnaire asked students about their experiences with theft from person, theft of goods or articles left unguarded, theft of vehicles (largely bicycles), theft of articles from vehicles and physical assaults resulting in bruising or cutting (Mawby, 1979). As with the majority of surveys, Mawby pointed out problems with refusals, exaggerations, absenteeism, telescoping, and the use of different techniques at each school.

Despite these problems, Mawby uncovered some very interesting results. The findings from the juvenile study were expected to mirror those from this wider study, namely, that area of residence correlated closely with victimisation rates (Mawby, 1979). This was not found to be the case. Mawby found that sex and offender status, not area of residence and social class, were strong indicators of victimisation rates.

Overall, the findings revealed that even when a limited number of offence types are considered, juveniles are more likely than adults to become victims. Furthermore, low reporting rates, coupled with low percentages of juvenile offenders being known to the police, allowed Mawby to shed more light on the substantial 'dark figure' and doubts about the reliability and validity of official statistics.

Males were found to be more likely victims than females and a highly significant relationship was found between offender status and victimisation (Mawby, 1979). It should be noted that the probable reasoning for no social class conclusion being drawn was that there was very little difference in the social classes making up the sample.

The entire area was exclusively working class, so any comparisons being made were being made between the types of workers within the class, for example, skilled manual workers being compared with unskilled workers.

Based on the similarities between Mawby's research and the current study, namely the focus on working-class areas that were in close proximity to one another, it will be interesting to discover if there is a similar finding of sex and offender status, not area of residence and social class, as strong indicators of increased victimisation rates in the current study. It will also be noteworthy to compare findings in terms of whether the current research reveals similar findings of: juveniles being more likely than adults to become victims, males being found to be more likely victims than females, and a highly significant relationship being found between offender status and victimisation. In terms of operationalization, Mawby's research highlighted problems with refusals, exaggerations, absenteeism, telescoping, and the use of different techniques at each school. Using this research as an example of what to expect in the current research will be helpful in terms of minimizing the occurrence of some of these problems.

3.3.3 *'Cautionary Tales': A Study of Young People and Crime in Edinburgh*

Mawby's study of juveniles took place over a decade before *'Cautionary Tales'*, but this study was one of the first in-depth studies of youth victimisation that was not simply part of a larger study. The study was carried out using a multi-method approach, involving the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The researchers combined the use of self-completion questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and informal discussion sessions. This survey departed from the use of household surveys, typically used in larger national surveys both in the 1990s and

today, through its use of self-completion questionnaires in a school setting. An advantage to this approach is youth being relieved of the pressures associated with answering questions about involvement in incidents that they do not want their guardian to know about. However, a notable disadvantage is group peer pressure that could be experienced in a school setting.

The sample was drawn from five schools in Edinburgh, all of which were in different parts of the city. A total of 1,150 students participated in the study, with 120 of these agreeing to participate in the qualitative element of it (face-to-face interviews and informal discussion sessions).

As mentioned previously, Anderson et al. (1994) found that half of those in the study had been the victims of either an assault, theft from the person or threatening behaviour during the nine-month period that they were questioned about. However, what made these findings even more worrying was the fact that approximately 29% of these youth victims claimed that the perpetrator of the crime was over the age of 18. The findings also revealed that perpetrators over the age of 18 were responsible for 30% of threats, 27% of assaults, and 21% of thefts from the person (Anderson et al., 1994). Unique gender differences among youth experiencing offences against the person were also revealed in the research. Boys were found to not only experience this type of victimisation, but also, to commit such offences more often than girls. The findings also highlighted the need to consider gender differences throughout the research, particularly in the questionnaire design phase. Anderson et al. state that:

From the interviews it appeared that, on those occasions when girls resort to physical violence, it takes the form of pulling hair, scratching, etc. – categories that were not adequately covered by the standardised questions we employed in the survey (1994, p. 40).

It is also commonly known that even though girls experience physical victimisation less often than boys, girls are likely to encounter isolation from peers, rudeness, and verbal arguments. These issues make attempts to capture levels of youth victimisation among girls more difficult. However, by including questions that cover these types of victimisation within the questionnaire and/or through qualitative research methods, these levels can be captured effectively.

It was also revealed that incidents of verbal and non-violent harassment by other young people were common for both boys and girls, with little gender differentiation. The findings revealed that:

49% of boys and 44% of girls had been frightened by someone 'shouting' at them; 38% of boys and 44% of girls by someone 'staring' at them; 34% of boys and 30% of girls by people 'asking them things', while a large percentage of the boys were also threatened (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 48).

The youth victimisation findings in this study were high across the spectrum of victimisation. These high levels of victimisation led directly to another study that set out to determine if these levels were accurate, and also, to determine if comparable levels could be found in a similar city.

The current study is similar to '*Cautionary Tales*' in its use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including the use of self-completion questionnaires in a school setting. Anderson et al. (1994) found that half of those in the study had been the victims of either an assault, theft from the person or threatening behaviour during the nine-month period that they were questioned about. Looking at offences against the person, findings revealed that boys experienced and committed this type of victimisation more often than girls. It will be interesting to see if these findings

are mirrored in the current research. The findings also highlighted the need to consider gender differences throughout the research, with an emphasis on making sure to note the differences in the ways girls and boys experience physical violence, which is of particular interest to the operationalization of the current study, as the design will have to take this into account.

3.3.4 More Sinned Against than Sinning: A Study of Young Teenagers Experiences of Crime

A principal goal of this study was to follow up '*Cautionary Tales: A Study of Young People and Crime in Edinburgh*', in order to determine how widespread the high scale of victimisations found in that study were, and to act as a test of those findings.

The same topics that were covered in the Edinburgh study were covered in the Glasgow study. However, researchers never saw the research instrument used by Anderson et al. and took purposeful steps "to avoid using the same wording, to eliminate the possibility that results were a function of the way the questions were asked (Hartless et al., 1995, p. 116).

In *More Sinned Against Than Sinning*, a sample of 208 youth 11-15 year olds was taken from Forms 1, 2 and 3 of an inner city Glasgow school. The sample consisted of 118 males and 87 females. Most of the youth considered themselves to be 'middle class' (62%), with 9% considering themselves upper class and the remaining 29% considering themselves 'working class'. The authors compared home tenure with these 'self-ascribed' classes and found that the former did in fact support the latter (Hartless et al., 1995).

The study investigated the areas of direct victimisation, indirect victimisation, the worries of young teenagers, the effects of witnessing crime, and offending behaviour. Some interesting findings were revealed in this study. However, some of these findings were rather difficult to interpret due to definitional problems. For example, there was not a clear definition of sexual offences. When direct victimisation during the teenagers' lifetime was discussed, sexual offences were discussed in terms of being 'flashed at' (23%), 'touched' (11%) and being a victim of 'sexual assault' (9%) (Hartless et al., 1995). However, when the offences were later 'batched into four groups', it was not made entirely clear which offences belonged in the four groups, which consisted of 'Sexual, Harassment, Assault and Theft' categories.

Highlighting issues concerning the proper definition of offences is key in any piece of research. If an offence is not clearly defined, problems may result, such as results being misconstrued or counted improperly.

The importance of clearly defining offences and categories used within a study is only one of many things that can be learned from this study. Some of the main findings included: 30% of youth being bullied, 20% having a bag snatched, 17% having a bike stolen, and 16% being beaten by an adult. Furthermore, 91% of youth said that they had witnessed crimes including assault, shoplifting, selling drugs, stealing cars and vandalising property, amongst others (Hartless et al., 1995). As far as offending behaviour is concerned, the authors found that non-offending was the norm discovering that "24 per cent had never committed any of the offences, and 84 per cent had offended either never, or only once or twice." The study was also interesting in its comparisons with the Edinburgh findings, where possible. Though the specific

comparisons will not be covered in detail here, the piece was concluded with the following:

It should be noted here that the Edinburgh study was larger and involved five schools, only one of which was comparable in type to the Glasgow school. In both studies, we find high rates of victimisation: in Edinburgh 50 per cent had been victims in the last year; in Glasgow 82 per cent had been, although the Glasgow study asked about a wider range of crimes (albeit in less depth) (Hartless et al., 1995, p.128).

In both studies, the extremely high rates of juvenile victimisation are clear. Studies such as these, and consequently, the alarmingly high levels of victimisation among young people, have spawned similar studies in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom. The studies discussed to this point have been examples of local victimisation studies. This report will now turn to a discussion of a good example of a national victimisation study performed as part of the British Crime Survey.

This study investigated the areas of direct victimisation, indirect victimisation, the worries of young teenagers, the effects of witnessing crime, and offending behaviour. Some of the difficulties in interpreting findings due to definitional problems were brought to light during the review of this research, which altered how the current study was operationalised. Namely, by taking care to clearly define incidents and categories, so that results are not misconstrued or miscounted. Some of the main findings included: 30% of youth being bullied, 20% having a bag snatched, 17% having a bike stolen, and 16% being beaten by an adult. As far as offending behaviour is concerned, the authors found that non-offending was the norm. Again, it will be interesting to see how these findings compare with those in the current research.

3.3.5 Young People, Victimisation and the Police: British Crime Survey Findings on Experiences and Attitudes of 12 to 15 Year Olds

The next study is of pivotal importance to youth research due to its status as being the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. Prior to the 1992 'sweep' of the British Crime Survey (BCS), sweeps had focused solely on adults, making this the first sweep to include a sample of young people. This expansion in focus provided England and Wales with the first national picture of young people's experiences of victimisation, while away from the home.

The survey investigated six types of victimisation: assaults, harassment by adults, harassment by other young people, sexual harassment, thefts and attempted thefts from the person and thefts of unattended property. As with many victimisation surveys, the 1992 sweep also included questions concerning young people's attitudes towards crime and the police, drug use, offending behaviour, and other related topics. In total, 1,350 12 to 15 year olds were surveyed on their experiences of victimisation during a 6-8 month period, which began during the summer break.

The survey revealed that the majority of assaults against young people happened at or near school. Most perpetrators were already known to the victim and were of the same age and sex as the victim (Maung, 1995). These findings are not particularly surprising, as individuals in this age range would spend the majority of their time away from their parents, in or around school, with young people of the same age who they come into contact with on a regular basis. Overall, there were high levels of the incident types covered by the survey, including a third of the sample being assaulted on at least one occasion and a fifth of the sample having had something stolen from them.

Furthermore, nearly a fifth of the 12 to 15 year olds said they experienced something they regarded as crime in the previous six to eight months (Maung, 1995). Similarly, a fifth of the sample reported being harassed by people in their same age group and a fifth reported being harassed by someone over the age of 16 (Maung, 1995). Maung (1995) also found that self-reported offending was one of the strongest correlates of victimisation, that parental supervision seemed to reduce risks overall, and that approximately four-fifths of assaults and incidents of harassment by young people were not felt to be crimes.

The survey investigated six types of victimisation: assaults, harassment by adults, harassment by other young people, sexual harassment, thefts and attempted thefts from the person and thefts of unattended property. The survey revealed that the majority of assaults against young people happened at or near school and were perpetrated by those of the same age and sex. Overall, there were high levels of the incident types covered by the survey. The findings that stood out the most in terms of how the current research might be operationalised more effectively were that self-reported offending was one of the strongest correlates of victimisation and that parental supervision seemed to reduce risks overall. Having the importance of these findings highlighted in previous research has ensured that they will be incorporated into the current research.

This is only one example of a youth victimisation survey undertaken on a national level. In the following section, a major longitudinal study performed on a local level will be discussed.

3.3.6 *The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime: Key Findings at Ages 12 and 13 (April 2001)*

The Edinburgh Study was a major longitudinal study of 4,300 youth, the majority of which were between 11½ and 12½ years of age at the beginning of the study. The study was carried out through the use of self-completion questionnaires administered in schools, which were followed up by semi-structured interviews with a sample of the youth. The goal of the study was to gain a broader understanding of the criminal behaviour of youth, through studying them during an important developmental period in their lives. There were three overriding objectives to the study (Smith et al., 2001.) The first objective involved the investigation and identification of the factors that impact and processes involved in youth offending. The second objective set out to examine these factors/processes within three contexts including: “individual development through the life course; the impact of interactions with formal agencies of social control and law enforcement; the effect of the physical and social structure of the individual’s neighbourhood” (p. 2). The final objective involved the examination of male and female differences in the extent and patterns of offending behaviour, within these three contexts.

Some of the questionnaire themes covered in the first two sweeps of the survey included parental relationships, leisure activities, personality characteristics, self-reported delinquency, contact with the police, and experience of victimisation, amongst others. The Edinburgh Study’s coverage of the relationship between offending and victimisation is unique in that it considers the ‘life-course perspective’. The linkages between victims and offenders were examined with this perspective in mind and researchers found that:

It is likely that many offenders have been victims at an early age, that offending and victimisation feed off each other in the process of individual development, and that the social settings, habits, and psychological traits associated with them are similar (Smith et al., 2001, p. 64).

The questionnaire focused on various forms of victimisation including taking property by threats of force, threats to hurt, actual physical hurts, attacks with a weapon, bullying and harassment by adults. The researchers further split these victimisations into crime victimisations, and bullying and harassment by adults, finding that around half of 12 to 13 year olds had been affected by each of these three types of victimisation (Smith et al., 2001). The study also revealed that victimisation is closely related to delinquency and that boys are approximately twice as likely to be victimised as girls.

The questionnaire themes covered in this study were similar to those covered in the current research, except for the focus on harassment by adults. Therefore, the questions themselves were reviewed in order to determine how best to operationalize each of these themes. Furthermore, the Edinburgh Study's coverage of the relationship between offending and victimisation, which takes the 'life-course perspective' into account, showed that many offenders had previously been victims and that victimisation and offending 'feed off' one another. These findings reinforced the need to determine the possible links between victimisation and offending through the creation of structural equation models of both types of incidents. Findings also revealed that boys are almost twice as likely to be victimised as girls, providing support for the expectation of similar results in the current study.

3.3.7 Self-Reported Delinquency and Other Behaviours amongst Young People in Northern Ireland

This study was part of a larger international study being carried out by the Centre for Independent Research and Analysis of Crime (CIRAC). The study was carried out between November 1992 and February 1993 in the city of Belfast. A modified random walk method was used by 25 interviewers to obtain a sample of 456 males and 427 females, ranging fairly evenly in age from 14-21 years old.

McQuoid (1994) found that 47% of 14-21 year olds surveyed had committed at least one delinquent act in the past year, while 76% had done so at some point in their lives. He also found that the majority of acts were not very serious in nature including things such as vandalism, spraying graffiti, and evading paying bus fare. The survey also found that two thirds of the respondents did not experience any crime during the last year (66.5%). Some of the more interesting findings included the most common victimisation experience, which was being bullied or hurt (18.7%), and the majority of respondents worrying most about cash being stolen (53.8%).

Gender also featured heavily in this piece of research. In terms of offending, a prevalence rate of 38% among females and 56% among males was uncovered. Where minor incidents were involved, there was not a lot of variation in the frequency of male and female experiences. However, when the level of offending escalated, the gender gap expanded. McQuoid explains:

While the gender gap was slight among the problem behaviours, all other categories of delinquent acts showed a predominance of male involvement from just under a third in property and violent offences to around a quarter in drug and youth related offences. Females on the other hand ranged from almost one fifth for property offences to just one tenth for youth related ones (1994, p. 10).

McQuoid (1994) also found that other than drug-related offending, higher educational status was associated with less offending, while lower educational status, particularly if the person is no longer in full-time education, was associated with a higher frequency of violent and property offending. The links between socioeconomic status and offending were not as dependent on external factors. Generally speaking, both the frequency and prevalence of offending was greater amongst those of a lower socioeconomic status, but interestingly, drug offences were widespread across all classes.

As already noted, this study was part of a larger international study and featured the use of a random walk method incorporating interviews, thus was not as useful as some of the other research in an operational sense. However, McQuoid's findings revealed that the majority of acts were not very serious in nature including things such as vandalism and evading paying bus fare, providing support for the expectation that many youth experiences are minor in nature. The role of gender in victimisation and offending also featured heavily in this piece of research, which revealed an ever-expanding gender gap with the escalation of offenses. Again, it will be interesting to see if this particular finding is mirrored in the current research.

3.3.8 Seminal Research: Summary of Main Findings

Though each of the above studies are unique and were carried out over several decades, they share many similar findings (that are expected to emerge in the current body of work as well), which can be summarised as:

1. The majority of youth victims do not report the crime to the police. Various reasons have been given to explain this trend. Some examples include not

wanting to get anyone in trouble, not wanting to waste time filling out forms when nothing could be done, and feeling that the crime was not significant enough to be reported to the police.

2. Youth are several times more vulnerable to becoming victims than adults.
3. Most perpetrators of crimes are already known to the victim.
4. The majority of youth victimisation occurs at school, while youth are in the company of others.
5. In the majority of cases, boys are more likely to be victimised than girls. The one area where this is not the case is the rates of victimisation for sexual offences, where girls almost always experience higher rates.
6. Even when only a handful of offences are being considered, rates of juvenile victimisation are still high.
7. Fear of crime is not proportional to victimisation risk. Elderly females tend to have the highest levels of fear of crime, yet they experience the lowest levels of victimisation risk.
8. Most studies involving young people and crime have focused on studying young offenders. The discovery of high victimisation rates among young people has helped to change this trend.
9. Small numbers of youth are responsible for the majority of serious offences.
10. Small numbers of youth experiences the most serious forms of victimisation and often experience repeat victimisation as well.

Now that some of the most pivotal research has been discussed and a summary of main findings has been provided, this chapter will move on to a review of some of the important themes that have come to light over the last decade and their implications for youth victimisation research.

3.4 Important Themes Emerging from a Review of Recent Youth Crime Research

Several themes emerged from a review of youth crime research. The following sections aim to provide a review of those that are the most important and relevant to this particular study.

3.4.1 Multiple and Repeat Victimization

There are different forms of multiple victimisation. Multiple crime-type victimisation (MCV) is the extent to which persons are victims of more than one kind of offence over a given period (Hope et al., 2001). On the other hand, repeat victimisation is the increased likelihood of becoming a victim, once you have already been victimised. This research is interested in investigating young people's overall experiences of victimisation and determining whether MCV and repeat victimisation are factors.

Repeat victimisation can be discussed in terms of the 'heterogeneity hypothesis'. This concept has been discussed throughout both the criminological and victimological literature and is summarised quite clearly by Wittebrood and Nieuwbeerta (2000):

That some individuals have a higher risk of being repeatedly victimized than others is assumed to be due to the fact that these individuals differ with respect to personal characteristics relevant to the risk of victimisation. Because adolescents, for example, run a higher risk of being victimized, their risk of being victimized repeatedly is also higher (p. 93).

Research has also shown that massive crime reduction capabilities are possible through the simple reduction in repeat victimisations (Ellingworth, Farrell, & Pease, 1995). The reason that this is the case is that to a large extent, there is a concentration of crime on particular individuals and particular places and dwellings. Evidence of this can be seen in research conducted by Ellingworth et al. who discovered that “between 24 and 38 per cent of all such crime, both property and personal, is suffered by people who experience five or more such offences during the BCS recall period of a little over a year” (1995, p. 363). It is clear that repeat victimisation is common amongst both victims of property crimes and personal crimes, with Ellingworth et al. (1995) highlighting their findings of 77% of cases of personal crimes and 63% of all property crimes being repeat cases.

The BCS sweeps are an excellent way to establish repeat victimisation trends. Understanding repeat victimisation is key when evaluating survey statistics, as it has a major effect on estimations of both incidence and prevalence. This can easily be seen in large-scale surveys such as the BCS, where high levels of repeat victimisation are demonstrated by lower prevalence rates when compared with corresponding incidence rates (Chaplin, Flatley, & Smith, 2011). BCS figures have consistently shown that variations in levels of repeat victimisation are dependent upon offence type. In 2009/2010, vandalism had high repeat victimisation rates (29%) compared with other crime types, while theft from the person had the lowest levels of repeat victimisation rates (5%). Vandalism is a reoccurring problem with repeat vandalism victimisation consistently accounting for approximately half of all BCS vandalism incidents, in recent BCS sweeps. In 1995, BCS crime rates peaked and there have not been significant increases for any of the various crime types since this period. There have been occasional marginal increases. For example, from the 2008/2009 to 2009/2010

BCS, there was an increase in the proportion of repeat acquaintance violence victimisation (31% compared with 23%), however, the 2010/11 BCS showed a decrease in the proportion of repeat acquaintance violence victimisation compared with 2009/10 (from 31% to 19%) (Chaplin, Flatley, & Smith, 2011). Repeat victimisation levels for personal theft also increased marginally to 8% in 2010/2011. Since 1995, the proportion of repeat victims has fallen for other crime types as well. Flatley, et al. highlight the most notable falls: vehicle-related theft (from 28% to 14%), violence (from 38% to 26%), and burglary (from 19% to 14%), while pointing out that in 2009/10, repeat victims experienced 53% of violent incidents and 31% per cent of burglaries, compared with 68% and 38%, respectively (2010). They also note that since 1995, these rates are in line with statistically significant decreases in the number of BCS incidents of these types.

The findings above support the idea that victimisation is one of the strongest predictors of further victimisation. Farrell and Pease (1995) have set out reasons to explain the theory that if you look where a crime happened last, you are likely to find where it will happen again. In “Once Bitten, Twice Bitten: Repeat Victimisation and Its Implications for Crime Prevention,” the authors set out four possible reasons to explain this theory:

- 1) Living in a bad area keeps one vulnerable.
- 2) Some people have chaotic lifestyles, occupations or leisure activities which make for continued vulnerability.
- 3) Some kinds of victimisation, such as shop theft, although attracting police and court attention, are perceived by their victims as one of the less pleasant circumstances of commercial life.
- 4) Some crimes attend bad relationships, and will continue as long as at least one of the parties to that relationship persists in regarding the relationship as extant.

(Farrell & Pease, 1995, p. 8)

It is clear that repeat victimisation and MCV are important trends within victimological research. The importance of the inclusion of repeat victimisation in research is made clear by Pease (1998):

Victimisation is the best single predictor of victimisation; that when victimisation occurs it tends to do so quickly; that high crime rates and hot spots are as they are substantially because of rates of repeat victimisation.... (p. v).

Along with previous victimisation, research has shown that drug and alcohol abuse are also clear indicators of both youth victimisation and youth offending.

3.4.2 The Effects of Drug and Alcohol Use on Youth Experiences

Drug use and victimisation have been shown to have a reciprocal relationship. Sullivan et al. have highlighted the fact that both self-restraint and the ability to keep emotions in check could be affected by victimization, which might increase the likelihood of using drugs (2007). Furthermore, researchers have reported a relationship with both indirect and direct victimisation and increased levels of drug and alcohol use (Vermeiren et al., 2003; Zinzow et al., 2009). International research has shown that the more involved young people are in using drugs, the more likely they are to have been the victim of multiple types of violence. Morojele and Brook (2006) discovered that 48% of frequent smokers, 52% of frequent drinkers, and 55% of frequent marijuana users reported having been victimised multiple times. These findings were in stark contrast to those who had experienced multiple victimisations and who reported never smoking (14%), drinking alcohol (14%), or smoking marijuana (17%).

Research linking drug use to offending and violence is not as prevalent as research into other factors such as victimisation and associations with criminal friends. However, there have been several studies that support drug use as a risk factor for offending

behaviour. Focusing on the indirect effects of drug use on offending, Pudney (2002) hypothesized that “soft drug use tends to increase the risk of minor offending, which in turn raises the hazard rate for serious offending” (p. 20). On the other hand, Nacro (2007) have identified direct indicators of offending behaviour that are statistically significant, which include: drug use, criminal friends, living in a crime-prone area, and poor parenting. Similarly, research undertaken by Vermeiren et al. (2003) found that levels of reported smoking, alcohol use, marijuana use, and hard drug use showed increases with adolescent exposure to violence in urban areas of Belgium, Russia, and the United States. Popovici, et al. 2014 provide further support with their findings that the use of cannabis amongst youth is significantly related to antisocial behaviour.

Drug and alcohol use and abuse continue to be a problem in Irish society. As with many countries around the world, evidence of excessive drinking patterns are in existence among Irish young people (Measham & Brain, 2005; Mongan et al., 2007). This is particularly problematic as there is also empirical evidence to support drinking and drug leading to problems with educational attainment, along with increased aggressive and violent behaviour (Lynskey & Hall, 2000; Mrug & Windle, 2009).

3.4.3 The Effect of Gender on Youth Experiences

Boys and girls tend to differ in the way they interact with their own gender, with boys tending to be more direct and physically aggressive with each other (Besag, 2006) and suffering more often from victimisation of a physical nature across all levels of education (Chapell et al., 2006; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). On the other hand, girls tend to take a more indirect approach to bullying and victimisation favouring gossip and name calling to physical fighting (Garandeanu & Cillessen, 2006).

Boys and girls also differ in terms of feelings towards safety, with girls feeling less safe at night and boys feeling less safe at school. The CSO (2010) reported that more than twice as many females than males felt unsafe or very unsafe after dark. Meanwhile, research undertaken by Garckija and Raižienė (2013) explored why boys feel less safe at school and included more exposure to violence as one of the possible reasons.

Several studies have explored gender differences in terms of the influence of criminal friends. Two studies using longitudinal data, focused on whether delinquent friends had similar effects on boys and girls. Interestingly, their findings were quite different, with males experiencing stronger effects from having delinquent friends in Piquero et al. (2005), while Laird et al. (2005) found that the effects were similar for boys and girls. A possible explanation for this difference can be found in research which engages the National Youth Survey data to investigate gender differences on the influence of criminal friends. In research conducted by Mears et al. 1998, it was discovered that evaluations based on morals (more commonly undertaken by girls) lead to reductions in or protection from delinquent friend influence, which in turn, creates large differences in the delinquent behaviours of boys and girls.

3.4.4 Evidence-Based Crime Prevention

The review of youth crime research naturally led to the various approaches to evidence-based crime prevention policies and practices. Some of the most noteworthy being resilience-led approaches, focused deterrence strategies, and school-based programs to prevent violent and aggressive behaviour, all of which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Gilligan explains why resilience-led approaches are so appealing, in the face of the alternatives that tend to focus on why youth behave badly:

If we can understand why some children have good outcomes following exposure to adversity, then we may have important clues about how to transfer those gains to wider numbers of children who might otherwise succumb to the frequently damaging effects of adversity (2000, p. 37).

Understanding protective and risk factors is of vital importance to the understanding of resilience-led approaches. Protective factors are those factors that increase a young person's resilience and range from clear parental standards when it comes to not using drugs and alcohol and doing well in school, positive relationships with parents and teachers, and the ability to get along with others and get over change and negative life happenings (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992). The relationship between risk factors and youth behaviour is not as straightforward, as it is never a given that a particular risk factor will definitely cause an unwanted behaviour. The identification of risk factors that have been scientifically linked to unwanted behaviour, however, is vital to understanding what measures may be put into place to reduce the unwanted behaviour. Several risk factors have been identified that are particularly relevant to the current research and are identified as being either individual or peer risk factors. Individual Risk Factors include factors such as alienation, inclinations toward smoking, alcohol and drug use, delinquency, antisocial/aggressive behaviour, and school failure, while Peer Risk Factors include having friends who smoke, drink, use drugs, or engage in violent behaviour (Hawkins, Catalano & Associates, 1992; Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992).

Coleman and Hagell (2007) pinpoint some of the major issues in researching risk and protective factors and resilience. Specifically, they highlight the fact that as long as protective factors are in place and risk factors are minimal, the vast majority of youth

are capable of resilience. On the other hand, they point out the fact that when dealing with weak protective factors and severe risk factors, the majority of youth fail to cope. They also identify chronic and constant changes such as conflict at home and changing schools often, as more serious risk factors than acute risks such as bereavement.

One of the most important steps for communities to take in ensuring the success of resilience-led prevention efforts is identifying an instrument that can be used to measure the risk and protective factors that are so important to resilience, effectively. Since 1995, the Communities That Care Youth Survey instrument has been used to assess a wide range of youth risk and protective factors used to support evidence-based prevention planning at both the school and community levels (Hawkins, et al., 2002). Using this or a similar instrument to assess risk and protective factors and resilience-increasing measures in Dublin would be a good starting point for increasing the amount of successful prevention initiatives in the area.

Focused deterrence strategies are another form of evidence-based crime prevention tools that merit attention. In recent years, this approach has gained popularity, particularly amongst those involved in efforts to reduce repeat offending and group violence. Recent research undertaken by Braga and Weisburd has provided encouraging support for focused deterrence strategies, finding that ten of the eleven studies investigated showed reductions in crime that were both strong and statistically significant (2012). Their research also supported previous research undertaken by Durlauf and Nagin (2011) that found “the noteworthy marginal deterrent effects generated by allocating police officers, and their criminal justice partners, in ways that heighten the perceived risk of apprehension” (Braga & Weisburd, 2012, p. 349) reduce levels of crime and imprisonment. However, despite these findings and other research

providing additional support to these types of strategies (Braga, 2012; Engel, Tillyer & Corsaro, 2013; Klein, 2011) there is still debate around deterrence in terms of whether it actually works. What is more important is the realization of the potential for negative consequences when deterrence strategies are not used or removed, as Kennedy (2009) explains:

The expectation of official action clearly does not deter all offending, but it equally clearly deters a lot of offending, and when it is altered or removed, people's behaviour changes. (p. 9)

Unfortunately, offenders are quite capable of working the system and learning how to work around deterrence strategies. The point is that even in working around them, crime is reduced, even if only by a small amount, making the strategies very worthwhile. The focus now should be on learning to research them in a more effective manner so that support for them can be based on scientific evidence and they can be implemented more effectively (Braga & Weisburd, 2011; Braga & Weisburd, 2014).

School-based programs to prevent violent and aggressive behaviour can also be instrumental to youth crime prevention and are a successful evidence-based crime prevention tool. It was encouraging to discover that all school-based intervention programs covered in research performed by Hahn et al., 2007 were found to reduce violent behaviour. These programmes included cognitive/affective strategies focused on dealing with antisocial and disruptive behaviours, information-based strategies focused on violence and bullying reduction, and social skills building strategies that provided additional strategies for dealing with antisocial and disruptive behaviours. Additional research has shown that school-based programmes have resulted in positive adjustments amongst students in terms of increased school achievement, decreased physical violence and bullying, and increased positive social behaviours, to name a few

(Flay, et al., 2010; Grossman, et al. 1997; Li, et al., 2011; McMahon, et al., 2000). These positive results, combined with the fact that “investment in universal school-based programs to prevent violence has the potential for significant positive economic returns in the future” (Hahn, et al., 2007, p. S124) show that more research in the area is urgently needed.

Finally, focusing research on declines in youth violence, offending and victimisation may also be helpful in establishing evidence to determine which prevention strategies and policies are the most effective. Finkelhor, et al. (2014) have pointed out that valuable feedback on effective policy mixes can be obtained through comparing trends in violence and crime with local policies on these issues. However, the authors also point out that “evaluations of specific prevention programs are the most conclusive for guiding prevention strategy” (Finkelhor, et al., 2014, p. E6). It is clear that the rigorous evaluation of evidence-based prevention policies and practices is just as important as the policies and practices themselves.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of issues surrounding crime research in Ireland, and the research of youth, providing a good foundation for the understanding of the current research. As mentioned previously, there are several issues to be considered when undertaking this type of research, specifically the dependent status of children and young people, and the differences in victimisation experiences among children, according to age groups. These differences are possible indicators of trends in future victimisation experiences, and may also indicate variations in types of victimisations according to age. The following chapter will provide the theoretical

foundations for this piece of research and will outline some of the important risk factors that have emerged.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to review the theories informing the research and to explore how they influence and provide structure to the project. Many theories have been used to explain the linkages between victimisation and offending amongst young people, why individuals become victims, and why they take part in delinquent behaviour. This thesis will approach the research questions from both a psychological positivist and sociological positivist perspective. Answering the research questions from a mainly positivist perspective is not to discount the important influence of critical and realist criminological theories, symbolic interactionism, and cultural criminology. Future research would benefit from exploring the precepts established within these alternative realms of criminology. However, for the purposes of this study, a positivist approach will be adopted in order to provide a unified basis of theoretical understanding of the issues at hand. The theories informing this research include: lifestyle theory, social control theory, rational choice theory, routine activities theory, and finally, general strain theory, all of which will be discussed in detail below. Though each of these theories can be used in numerous ways to explain youth victimisation and offending, the following paragraphs aim to highlight how each of these theories will be linked to direct factors within this project including parental supervision, criminal friends, and drug use.

4.2 Using Social Control and Bonding Theories to Identify the Roles of Parents and Criminal Friends in Youth Victimization and Offending

A major focus of both criminological and sociological research is the relationship between antisocial peers and criminal behaviour (Conway & McCord, 2002; Ferguson, San Miguel & Hartley, 2009; Mills, Kroner, & Forth, 2002; Monahan, Steinberg & Cauffman, 2009; Thornberry, 1994) and the importance of the school environment and relationships with family and friends in the development of this behaviour (Church, et al., 2012; Yibing, et al., 2011). The role of parents and supervision, or lack thereof, in youth crime has also garnered a lot of interest in recent years. From the nightly news to youth crime policies, echoes of parents being at fault for bad youth behaviour can be heard. When asking who is at fault and looking for someone to blame, it is often parents who lose out. In comparison to 'peers', 'media' and 'school', Brank and Weisz (2004) found that the vast majority of respondents (68.7%) considered the parents and the young offenders themselves to be the most responsible for any criminal behaviour that the young person took part in. Social control and bonding theories contribute greatly to a better understanding of why young people get involved in delinquent behaviour and how parents influence this, and also, why they choose to associate with criminal friends. In the following sections, these theories and the empirical research supporting them will be reviewed.

Some of the earliest advocates of social control theory were Reiss (1951), Nye (1958), and Matza (1964). Reiss (1951) postulated that delinquency was the breakdown of control on a social and individual level, which led to behaviour focused away from conventional norms. Reiss saw delinquency as the behaviour that resulted when personal and social controls failed. He defined personal control as "the ability of the

individual to refrain from meeting needs in ways which conflict with the norms and rules of the community” and social control as “the ability of social groups or institutions to make norms or rules effective” (Reiss, 1951, p. 196). Though Reiss did not go on to give more specifics about these abilities or the mechanisms of control that might lead to conformity, he did pinpoint the importance of family and other close groups in providing positive values and roles as a means to preventing delinquency. His theory focused on the internalization of personal controls and externalization of social controls applied in the form of informal and legal social sanctions.

Nye built upon this idea with the addition of varying control factors. Nye (1958) suggested three main control factors, which either suppress or facilitate anti-social behaviour: direct control, indirect control, and internal control. Punishment for misbehaviour and rewards for compliant obedience were features of direct control. An example of direct control would be the control parents exert over their children or schools direct over their students to restrict youth activities through the threat of sanctions. Indirect control can be seen as the more powerful control, as it is the control loved ones have over you in the sense that getting into trouble might hurt them, or at the very least, disappoint them. Indirect control involves the conformity to social values in an attempt to avoid hurting, shaming, or disappointing those young people care about. Indirect control and internal control are similar in that the effect an action may have on others factors into the decision to perform a delinquent act. Internal control involves using a system of punishments and rewards that leads to the internalisation of both family and social values in a principled sense that will make youth feel bad if they do not conform and good if they do conform. In other words, the strength of one’s internal control is directly related to what kind of hold an individual’s guilty conscience has on them.

Conscience plays a major role in Matza's drift theory as well. Matza (1964) described young people drifting back and forth between conforming to conventional moral restraints and breaking free of these restraints and participating in delinquent behaviour, in the face of temptation. Matza's drift theory supports social control theory in that if moral restraints are in some way controlling delinquent behaviour, then anything that weakens those restraints, also weakens social control.

Hirschi (1969) advanced the theories of those that had preceded him (Reiss, Nye and Matza) and developed a more comprehensive explanation of the social control of delinquent behaviour through social bonds. In the context of this study, Hirschi's social bonding theory will be discussed in terms of youth victimisation and offending, and parents' potential role in youth victimisation and offending behaviour.

Social bonding theory declares that those who are closely bonded to social groups, for example, school, friends, and family, are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviour. Social bonding theory is primarily concerned with levels of conformity, not delinquency, and it can be looked at on both community and individual levels. At the community level, the theory is primarily concerned with explaining the creation of conformist behaviours, or rather, the failure to do so. On an individual level, the theory is concerned with issues such as attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Hirschi, 1969). These issues are presented as variables in Hirschi's work, and of the four, attachment and commitment have gained the most support within other bodies of research. For example, research undertaken by Krohn and Massey (1980) involving a sample of over 3000 youth found that the four elements of Social Bonding Theory were all predictive of deviant behaviour to varying degrees but were generally less predictive of serious forms of deviance such as stealing something worth more than fifty dollars.

Commitment was more strongly related to partaking in deviant behaviour than both belief and attachment. It was also discovered that while commitment and belief were more strongly related to engagement in deviant behaviour for females, attachment was more important when it came to males.

Hirschi (1969) argued that juveniles who are more attached to parents and others: have more to lose from getting involved in criminal behaviour, have a stronger moral belief system when it comes to the law, are more involved in traditional activities, and are more likely to stay out of trouble. His theory is supported by research that has shown that effective parental support and supervision has the ability to constrain the motivation towards delinquent behaviour (Wright & Cullen, 2001) and that consistent parental supervision and close emotional attachment to parents have proven to decrease the number of criminal acts committed by young people (Hay, 2001; Wright & Cullen, 2001). Other studies lend support to the idea that parents play a large role in the behaviour of young people through their focus on the behaviour of the parents. Research undertaken by Unnever, Colvin and Cullen revealed that ineffective parental support and parental behaviour that is itself deviant result in weakened bonds with their children which have the doubly negative effect of decreasing constraints and increasing motivations for undesirable behaviour (2004).

Recent research has provided an alternative view to Hirschi. Ingram, Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, and Bynum (2007) discovered that parental attachment did not have any direct influences on criminal association, but rather, a weak indirect influence which operated through supervision provided by parents. In keeping with social learning and related theories, the research revealed that associating with delinquent peers increased:

The likelihood of delinquent behaviour, even after controlling for parental relationships and past involvement in delinquency. Conversely, youth without delinquent friends were significantly more likely to be in the group that would be the least likely to have committed a delinquent act at T2. These were some of the strongest effects of all the relationships observed in the model. (Ingram, et al. 2007, p. 395).

This is suggestive of parental supervision being important in terms of scrutinising the type of friends youth associate with, independent of attachment levels to parents. Significant amounts of research have been undertaken which support the finding that inadequate parental supervision is a significant predictor of youth associations with criminal friends (Ingram et al., 2007; Kim, Hetherington, & Rice, 1999; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Furthermore, research conducted by Jang and Smith (1997) and Warr (2005) provides further support for Hirshi's theory emphasizing the importance of strong bonds and appropriate levels of parental supervision, in decreasing the risk of both developing relationships with criminal friends and participation in delinquent behaviour. Finally, Sampson & Laub (1993) provide support for the idea that youth conforming to societal norms on a more regular basis may be the subsequent result of more effective parenting and the protection of children from associating with criminal friends.

There is compelling evidence to support the contention that individuals who have criminal friends have an increased likelihood of becoming criminals themselves (Agnew, 1991; Akers, 2009; Elliott & Menard, 1996; Haynie, 2002; Pratt, 2010; Warr, 2002; Warr & Stafford, 1991). An opposing viewpoint to this claim has been presented by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) and backed up by Matsuede and Anderson (1998). The basis of this opposition is in the presumption that low self-control is at the root of criminality, and as such, relationships between criminal friends and criminality are only important when low self-control is also taken into account. However, there are several

examples of empirical research supporting a direct effect between having criminal friends and partaking in criminal behaviour, which control for low levels of self-control and prior criminal conduct (Matsueda & Anderson, 1998; Pratt & Cullen, 2000; Warr, 2002).

It is clear that friends and peer groups are of great importance during the teenage years (Huba & Bentler, 1980) and this importance has the ability to create risk factors and protective factors that are very strong (Maxwell, 2002). Just as adults do, young people tend to want to be friends with others who are like them in terms of what they like to do and the types of people they like to spend their time with. However, there can be many negative consequences that come with a negative friendship. Associations with criminal friends are only one aspect of youth lifestyles that affect young people's offending and victimisation risk, others will now be discussed as part of Lifestyle Theory.

4.3 Using Lifestyle and Routine Activities Theory to Explain the Link between Victims and Offenders

A classic example of a study into similarities between victims and offenders is Wolfgang's 1958 study *Patterns in Criminal Homicide*. In this study, he found that victims and offenders are often one in the same. Gottfredson's research was also instrumental in highlighting the association between victimisation and offending factors. He stated that "the processes that reduce the restraints to offend are similar to the processes in lifestyle terms that affect the probability that persons will be in places at times and around people where the risk of victimisation is high" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 726). *The Link Between Offending and Victimisation Among Adolescents* (Lauristen,

Sampson, & Laub, 1991) was another seminal study performed in this area. This study examined the first five waves of the National Youth Survey and discovered that youth involvement in delinquent lifestyles greatly increases the risks of victimisation. A similar study was performed by Esbensen and Huizinga (1991), who revealed that:

The overall relationship between the variety of delinquent involvement and the likelihood of victimisation was remarkably strong....In all instances, those juveniles reporting no involvement in delinquent behaviour also reported the lowest levels of victimisation” (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1991, p. 215).

Research has consistently shown that there is a strong relationship between victimization and offending amongst young people and that negative experiences, including victimisation, often encourage the development of delinquent behaviour (Fagan & Mazerolle, 2011; Jennings, Piquero, & Reingle, 2012; Agnew, 2006). The link between victims and offenders has been explored in several ways throughout the years, for example, through retrospective and prospective studies. These studies might involve investigating the lives of delinquents backwards or abused/neglected children forwards. Other examples of studies include birth cohort studies, and of course, victimisation studies.

There are several seminal works that present evidence in support of the link between offending and victimization (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1991; Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991; Shaffer & Ruback, 2002; Zhang, Welte, & Wieczorek, 2001), as well as more recent studies (Chen, 2009; Jennings, et al., 2010; Maldonado-Molina, et al., 2010) that provide additional empirical support.

Lifestyle theory states that the likelihood of victimisation depends heavily on lifestyle. One of the primary texts written on lifestyle theory is *Victims of Personal Crime: An Empirical Foundation for a Theory of Personal Victimization* (Hindelang, Gottfredson,

& Garofalo, 1978). Lifestyle theory asserts that the relationship between victimisation and demographics can be attributed to lifestyle. Hindelang et al. (1978) define lifestyle as routine daily activities, both of a vocational and leisure nature, which determine the likelihood of personal victimisation through exposure and association. Victimisation risk is increased by exposure to particular situations and associations with people who share characteristics with offenders. This theory is supported by research which has found that regular unsupervised socializing outside the home is typical of the youth lifestyle that appears to create the most risk of involvement in offending (Mahoney et al., 2004; Osgood & Anderson, 2004; Wikström & Butterworth, 2006).

Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo (1978) provide propositions which further explain how risk is increased by particular exposures and associations. A detailed description of how each of these propositions are incorporated into the survey design will be discussed in the Methodology Chapter, while a summary of each of these propositions is detailed below:

Proposition 1: There is a direct relationship between the likelihood of a person experiencing a personal victimisation and the amount of time a person spends out in public places (particularly at night).

Proposition 2: Variations in lifestyle affect the likelihood of being in public places (particularly at night).

Proposition 3: There is a disproportionate amount of socialising that takes place among those who make similar lifestyle choices.

Proposition 4: The extent of shared demographic characteristics between victims and offenders are a factor in determining likelihood of personal victimization.

Proposition 5: Variations in lifestyle affect the amount of time spent among nonfamily members.

Proposition 6: The amount of time spent amongst nonfamily members increases the likelihood of victimisation, theft in particular.

Proposition 7: Differing lifestyles are linked to differences in the ability to isolate oneself from those who have offender characteristics.

Proposition 8: In terms of being a target for personal victimisation, differing lifestyles are linked with differences in the vulnerability, convenience, and desirability of a person as a target. (pp. 251-264)

The above propositions highlight the fact that being in particular places, at particular times, with certain types of people can all contribute to increased victimisation risk. Garofalo summarises the point by explaining that “victimisation is not evenly distributed randomly across space and time – there are high-risk locations and high-risk time periods” (1987, p. 26). Research undertaken by Dempsey, Fireman, and Wang (2006) support Garofalo’s assertion, while highlighting correlations between victims and the perpetrators of crimes. They found that both victims and offenders exhibit antisocial and impulsive behaviours; in the case of victims, these types of behaviours may be contributory factors in their subsequent victimisation, since their behaviour may lead to putting themselves in more high-risk situations.

Similarly, research undertaken by Victim Support (2007) identified several contributory pathways which highlighted which experiences of victimisation/offending can lead to an increased risk of victimisation/offending. Three main direct pathways were identified between violent victimisation and offending including: revenge on the perpetrator, third party revenge due to perpetrator revenge being deemed too risky, and involvement with violent peers as a means of protection. On the other hand, two main direct pathways were identified between offending and victimisation including: retaliation from their victim and the perception that they lack adult protection based on their offender status.

Finkelhor and Dzinba-Leatherman (1994) provide a strong critique of lifestyle theory (delinquent lifestyle in particular), as an explanation for youth victimisation through highlighting the fact that many children/youth are victimised despite not being delinquent. They also point out that lifestyle theory is better at explaining crimes such as assaults and robberies perpetrated by strangers, which is not helpful in explaining child/youth victimisation, which is characteristically perpetrated by acquaintances and family members.

Despite these critiques, lifestyle theory has gained considerable attention within the discipline of criminology and is also one of the most commonly applied theories within victimology (Lauritsen, 2010; Svensson & Pauwels, 2010; Zaykowski & Gunter, 2013). In the quest to answer who is at the highest risk of becoming a victim and why, considering lifestyle theory is key.

In routine activities theory, Cohen and Felson focus on three components necessary for 'direct-contact predatory violations': a suitable target, likely offender, and the absence of a capable guardian against crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). All of these components are noted because of their association with criminal opportunity. The removal, or addition in the case of the guardian, of any of these factors from a potential criminal event automatically decreases the probability of occurrence. There are several examples of research findings that are consistent with routine activities theory (Bernburg & Thorlindsson, 2001; Cromwell, et al., 1991; Sherman, Gartin, & Buerger, 1989).

Of particular interest to this study is the research undertaken by Osgood et al., 1996, who used routine activities theory to explain individual offending, stepping away from the more common use as a method to identify group patterns of victimisation

(Maxfield, 1987; Tseloni, et al., 2004). The research conducted by Osgood et al. had a particular focus on peer socialization that took place in an unstructured manner, in the absence of authority figures. The researchers identified this type of socialization as the primary routine activity linked to general deviance. Findings revealed that the absence of authority figures willing to deal with delinquent behaviour, coupled with the absence of structured activities, leaves youth with more time to partake in delinquent behaviour and provides less opportunities for youth to be around authority figures who could reinforce social controls. This is supported by research showing that young people having friends who reinforce positive attributes can lead to youth doing better at school, higher levels of well-being, and more interest and involvement with extracurricular activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005), while having friends who support negative behaviour can lead to increases in drug use, delinquency, and crime. Further research has also supported the link between unsupervised, unstructured socialization and crime and delinquency (Anderson & Hughes, 2009; Hay & Forrest, 2008; Osgood & Anderson, 2004).

4.4 Using Strain Theory to Explain How Victimization Can Lead to Offending and Other Negative Behaviour

Strain theory is based on the notion that while the vast majority of individuals abide by the presiding values in society and the desire for status, prosperity, and material success, a large element of society lacks legitimate means to fulfill these desires. Theorists differed in their focus on the importance of variables affecting both motivating factors for criminal behavior and variables affecting access to legitimate means.

Merton (1938) theorised that monetary success was the dominant motivating factor for criminal behavior and that the belief that success could be rightly expected by those with ability was down to being socialized by American culture. Cohen (1955) built on this idea by adding a focus on the importance of social class. There was a revengeful undertone to Cohen's line of thinking. He stated that "the delinquent's conduct is right, by the standards of his subculture, precisely because it is wrong by the norms of the larger culture" (Cohen, 1955, p. 28). Some theorists diverged from Cohen in pinpointing the degree in which subcultures play a role in the types of delinquent behaviour an individual might decide to partake in. For example, Cloward and Ohlin's theory focused heavily on subcultures and availability of opportunities, both legitimate and delinquent. The actual neighbourhood young people lived in was of upmost importance to Cloward and Ohlin. There was also an evolutionary element to their theory in that they also focused on the existing criminal subcultures in the given area. According to Cloward and Ohlin (1960), criminal subcultures were maintained in a given area, through the recruitment of young people into previously existing, larger adult subcultures. They detailed three types of delinquent subcultures: conflict, criminal, and retreatist. If legitimate opportunities are limited, individuals found themselves recruited into one of these subcultures, depending on how the delinquent values were transmitted within a particular culture. For example, violence and instability are common in conflict subcultures, while property crime and higher levels of stability are common in criminal subcultures. On the other hand, drug use prevails amongst those partaking in a retreatist subculture, which individuals usually find themselves in because they are lacking in both criminal opportunities and the capacity for conflict (Jones, 2006).

In 1992, Agnew and White, proposed an even broader encapsulation of strains, the General Strain Theory. General Strain Theory was a cumulative revision of previous strain theories that offered yet another new focus, the avoidance of painful situations. Agnew (1985) stated that some members of society may not only have less access to legitimate means of achievement, but also, less access to ways that painful situations can be avoided. The aggravation involved in this denial of access may also lead to frustration and anger, which in turn, may lead to delinquency. Agnew (1985) also pointed out that the difficulties surrounding access to ways of avoiding painful situations are often not independent of those surrounding the achievement of goals set out by society. When young people are considered, it is easy to see how both of these types of limited access can cause anger and frustration. For example, if a young person is constantly being beaten up at school, they may be doubly affected since this would also interfere with achieving academic success, a societal goal.

General Strain Theory states that there may be a host of sources of strain, including the inability to succeed in achieving goals, the valued goals, the removal of valued incentives, and presence of undesirable stimuli, or the threat of same (Agnew & White, 1992). All of these sources of strain are linked to a potentially negative relationship with other individuals. Research has been undertaken in order to identify the types of strains that are most likely to lead to delinquency (Agnew, 2001), which has led to the identification of a variety of strains. For example, types of strains linked to delinquency vary from problems at home, problems at school, victimization, and difficulties with peers. Furthermore, research undertaken by Byongook, Hwang, and McCluskey (2011) found that a variety of strains generated within the school setting such as punishment by teachers and strain caused by examinations had a significant effect on bullying experiences, while Moon, Blurton, and McCluskey (2008)

highlighted the limitations caused by the over-reliance of secondary data sets by previous research, namely the failure to identify abuse by peers and negative teacher relationships as key strains. Aseltine, Gore, and Gordon, J. (2000) focused their research on strains caused by stressful life events and difficulties within relationships and used a variety of delinquency measures including both violent/nonviolent acts and marijuana use. Results revealed a link between negative life events leading to hostile and angry responses, which in turn, led to increases in more aggressive types of delinquency. There was no significant relationship found between negative life events and marijuana use or nonaggressive delinquency. Similarly, negative motivations increased by strains such as negative parenting, conflict in the family, and the lack of close, positive bonds between children and their parents have also been shown to lead to negative outcomes (Bean, Barber, & Crane, 2006; Hirschi, 2002).

All the various sources of strain will not be considered further here. However, Agnew (1992) has highlighted several categorical adaptations to strain that young people may engage in as part of their daily lives. These can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Ignoring or minimizing the importance of the strain, but reducing the significance of the values that the strain affects.
- 2) Maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing negative outcomes.
- 3) Acceptance of responsibility for the strain through convincing yourself that you deserve the strain you are experiencing.
- 4) Engaging in vengeful behaviour to put an end to the strain that others are being blamed for.

Both delinquent and criminal behaviours are possible adaptations to these strains, but positive adaptations are also a possibility. The point is that there is a choice, and there are several factors that influence this choice, for a young person experiencing strain.

Young people will either choose to engage in delinquent or non-delinquent forms of coping, depending on societal constraints and individual constraints such as values, goals, identities, interpersonal skills, intelligence, and self-esteem (Agnew & White, 1992).

4.5 Using Rational Choice Theory and Situational Crime Prevention to Limit Deviant Behaviour and Minimise Victimization Risk

Theories concerned with limiting deviant behaviour and minimising victimisation risk include rational choice and situational crime prevention. Limitations through possibilities of a practical nature are the primary focus of these theories. In seeking a further understanding of rational choice and situational crime prevention, it is helpful to try to determine what factors might actually lead a potential offender to participate in a criminal act. Bennett and Wright (1984) suggested six categories of factors, which were often mentioned as facilitators in the decision to offend by offenders in their research. These included: “(1) the influence of instrumental needs; (2) the influence of others; (3) the influence of presented opportunities; (4) no precipitating factor; (5) the influence of expressive needs; and (6) the influence of alcohol” (Bennett & Wright, 1984, p. 31). Despite their consequent determination that different interpretations of ‘situational determinants’ and the effects on individual offenders had various impacts on the decision-making process, “both the content of offenders’ responses and the manner in which they expressed themselves suggested that they chose to offend or not to offend on any particular occasion” (ibid., p. 42). Several studies support rational choice in as much as offenders do make a decision to commit a crime. However, these studies point out that offenders rarely undergo a decision-making process that is entirely rational, citing considerations such as opportunity and offenders’ inability to

reasonably assess arrest and imprisonment risks that can also come into play (Cromwell, Olson, & Avary, 1991; De Haan & Vos, 2003; Dugan, LaFree, & Piquero, 2005).

The choice of whether or not to offend is an important aspect of rational choice theory (Cornish & Clarke, 2008), because it allows for the theories to be applied in a practical sense, especially in the context of situational crime prevention, which will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Clarke has pointed out that many of the societal changes that have the possibility of bringing about desirable reductions in crime involve ‘extremely demanding resources’ (Clarke, 1980). Furthermore, he goes on to state that:

People are led to propose methods of preventive intervention precisely where it is most difficult to achieve any effects, *i.e.* in relation to the psychological events or the social and economic conditions that are supposed to generate criminal dispositions (Clarke, 1980, p. 137).

This is quite a bleak description of what the future has in store, but it has real applications for modern day crime prevention. A problem with some of the crime prevention strategies proposed by other crime theories is that their strengths are often lost in the fact that they are dependent on either a modification of behaviour or a revamping of society for actual implementation. There is never going to be a quick solution to all of the ills burdening society, and it is no mystery that depravity often results in crime. Though all societal problems should be pursued, from both a policy and practical standpoint, situational crime prevention is necessary in lowering levels of crime in the meantime.

Situational crime prevention sets out to counteract crime by limiting the opportunities to do so. Clarke lists three basic categories of techniques used within situational crime

prevention. These categories are increasing the effort, increasing the risks, and reducing the rewards (Clarke, 1992; Clarke & Mayhew, 1980). There are also several crime prevention strategies outlined by Clarke, within each of these categories. In an attempt to increase the effort of committing a particular crime, people can look to target hardening, access control, deflecting offenders, and controlling facilitators. To boost the risks involved in committing a crime, screening and surveillance (formal, employee, natural) should be considered. And finally, to reduce the rewards involved in committing a criminal act one should consider target removal, identifying property, removing inducements, and rule setting; according to Clarke, these are the twelve techniques of situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1992).

Individuals, companies, and the government all have the ability to use situational crime prevention policies and practices in their favour. While companies and the government often suggest changes in policy to facilitate these measures, individuals can use many of the twelve techniques of situational crime prevention easily to protect themselves from being a potential victim. Most of these solutions are common-sense approaches to crime prevention, but they are certainly not limited to individual use. The fundamental difference is that both the corporate world and the government are usually primarily concerned with the effectiveness of measures before they feel comfortable making changes to introduce them. Therefore, it is essential for them to consider that:

The effectiveness of preventive measures is dependent upon the validity of the assumptions underlying their design. Situational measures might have little impact on crime if offenders did not freely choose to offend, but were compelled to behave criminally by forces beyond their control (Bennett & Wright, 1984, p. 1).

There have been several studies done on the effectiveness of situational crime prevention measures (Bowers, Johnson, & Hirschfield, 2004; Eck, Clarke & Guerette,

2007; Sampson, Eck, & Dunham, 2009). Painter and Farrington (2001) undertook a study into situational crime prevention and young people. The study was investigating the impact of improved street lighting on crime in a local authority housing estate in Dudley, West Midlands. This is a good example of how situational crime prevention can affect youth crime and youth victimisation. Interesting findings revealed in this piece of research were that the largest decreases in crime were in violent acts after dark, that overall offending decreased in the area, and that improved street lighting encouraged people to use the streets after dark, increasing the risk of being 'pestered' (Painter & Farrington, 2001). Studies such as this one reveal the importance of situational crime prevention in youth victimisation research.

All of the theories that have been discussed thus far can be used in the study of youth crime through investigating choices, activities, surroundings, actions, control, and the behaviours of young people in a manner that will reduce their involvement in crime, deviance, and victimisation. Furthermore, these theories must be considered in a youth victimisation study because they:

highlight the fact that lifestyles and activities of different groups of individuals put them in environments or situations where they are more or less in contact with potential offenders and at risk of potential victimisation (Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996, p. 4).

There are many influences in young people's lives that affect the environments and situations that they find themselves living in. As stated above, different lifestyle choices made by young people, as well as the groups that they find themselves in, affect their ultimate risk of victimisation, as well as their decisions whether or not to commit crime.

4.6 Conclusion

The aforementioned theories all affect the study of youth victimisation in some shape or form. Some of the theories focus more on youth as criminals, rather than youth as victims. However, since similarities existing between the two groups have been established, there is an obvious reason for investigating both sides of the youth criminal dyad – youth victims and youth offenders. The following chapter will provide the methodology for this piece of research. Much can be learned from previous research, especially in terms of methodology. The influence of the research and theory covered in previous chapters will be apparent, particularly in the attempts to avoid pitfalls of previous research, while gaining relevant knowledge from it.

Chapter 5: Survey Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research design is described and the rationale behind the choice of design is presented. This chapter will present information regarding the overall research design, participants, instrument and measures used, procedures, ethical considerations, analysis of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis procedures, and also, analysis of the Structural Equation Modelling procedures. Finally, the various methodological difficulties that were encountered during the research will be discussed throughout the chapter.

Before deciding upon the methods to be used in this piece of research, several months were spent reviewing research methods literature in order to select the most appropriate research design. In the following section, the research design and rationale underpinning choice of design will be discussed in detail.

5.2 Research Design and Rationale Underpinning Choice of Design

Research involving young people can be impeded by difficulties that are not normally encountered with other sample groups. The research design applied to this project was formulated with these difficulties in mind. This study utilised an ad-hoc, self-completion survey, issued in a school setting.

Once the use of a victimisation survey was decided upon, the issue of where the survey should be administered had to be considered. The researcher decided to issue the survey in educational settings, both secondary schools and Youthreach centres. These

types of settings were chosen to facilitate simpler and more accurate data collection. Educational settings are also ideal for locating large numbers of young people for inclusion in the research, with minimal cost to the researcher, in a relatively short period of time. The self-report nature of the survey allowed young people to answer questions in an anonymous and confidential manner.

The survey was administered to fourth/transition and fifth year schoolchildren, allowing for an age range of 15-17 for inclusion in the research. Reviews of Pulse data from 1999-2009 have identified the peak period for juvenile crime as 15-18 (IYJS, 2009). A 15-17 year old age range was chosen for inclusion in this project, because it would incorporate the majority of this 'peak period' and would also avoid disturbing sixth year students during their leaving certificate preparations. During the course of this research, arguments have been voiced for the inclusion of students both below and above this age range. However, due to time and resource constraints, it would be impossible to widen the age range and obtain the same level of results.

Generally speaking, surveys are often criticised for their failure to include disadvantaged individuals. This is of particular concern to victim surveys, as disadvantaged individuals tend to suffer a higher propensity of victimisation. Fortunately, the use of localised surveys makes it much easier to facilitate the inclusion of these individuals in the research. This study aims to include these individuals through the inclusion of secondary schools, which have been identified as "disadvantaged" by the Department of Education and young people attending Youth Reach centres.

5.3 Participants

5.3.1 Sampling Considerations

Sampling is a major factor in ensuring the success of any quantitative research project. This is why several months were spent trying to discover the most effective sampling options for this research.

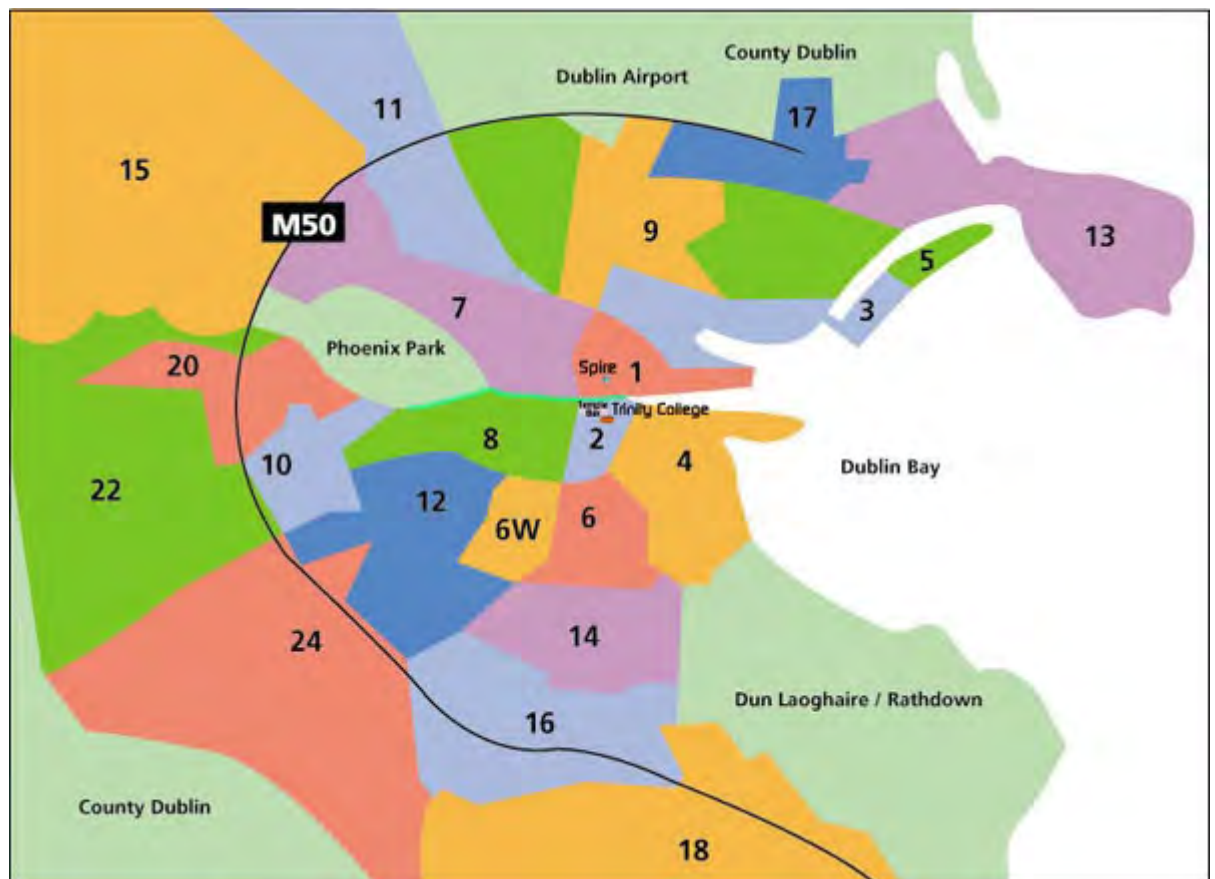
The original tender for this piece of research stated that a nationwide survey of young people would take place. As this is a fully-funded piece of research, every effort was made to try and achieve this type of sample. After several months of research into the issue, involving numerous meetings with statistics, SPSS, and criminology experts, it was decided that the researcher should abandon any further attempts to achieve this type of sample. In the end, it was determined that though this type of sample could be achieved, the time and costs involved would be exorbitant. There was also a general consensus among the experts who were approached, that though obtaining a nationwide sample would be impressive in some ways, it would be virtually impossible to achieve a nationwide sample that was representative – of anything; resulting in a weak research project. Therefore, it was decided that a much more interesting and manageable project would involve doing a localised study.

5.3.2 Sample Size and Frame

The sample size was not as large as originally expected, due to a disappointing participation level by local schools and Youthreach centres. However, due to the depth of the survey, a very sizeable amount of information about young people in inner-city Dublin was still obtained.

Inner-city Dublin (D1, D2, D7 and D8) was chosen as the location for the localised study, for three main reasons. Firstly, the area is convenient for the researcher, allowing for easier data collection, while keeping costs down. Secondly, the area as a whole is disadvantaged, making it easier to make future comparisons, with similarly disadvantaged areas. This is of particular interest to the study as there is an established agreement amongst researchers that there is a tendency for juvenile delinquency to be concentrated in areas that are generally more disadvantaged (Ingoldsby, et al., 2006; Schonberg, M. A., & Shaw, D. S., 2007; Winslow, E. B., & Shaw, D. S., 2007). Finally, there was an obvious geographic representation of the area, making it easily identifiable. As seen in the image below, areas within the D1, D2, D7, and D8 postcodes have been chosen, since these areas offer the best geographical representations of inner-city Dublin:

Figure A: Map of Dublin Postcodes – (www.jumbletown.ie, 2013)



Young people attending both schools and Youthreach centres (as located in Table 2) were included in the study, in order to achieve a more accurate picture of the victimisation experiences of all young people living in inner-city Dublin. This was due to the fact that while the majority of youth attend mainstream schools, Youthreach programmes are also available. These programmes provide two years integrated work experience, training and education for early school leavers, who are between 15-20 years old and have incomplete qualifications/vocational training.

Table 2: Location of Schools and Youthreach Centres in the Areas

Dublin 1 – Champions Avenue, Kings Inn Street, North Richmond Street, North Great George’s Street, Sherrod Street, and Dominick Place.

Dublin 2 – Westland Row and Lower Lesson Street.

Dublin 7 - Ratoath Road, Kilkieran Road, Nephin Road, Stanhope Street, and North Brunswick Street.

Dublin 8 – James’s Street, Synge Street, Bull Alley Street, Goldenbridge, Warrenmount, Pleasant Street, and Basin Lane Upper.

Of all the schools and Youthreach centres in the area (22 total), 12 agreed to participate and 10 declined to participate. The breakdown of the schools/Youthreach centres that took part in this research, by area, name, type of facility, size, age range, gender, and youth participation is detailed in Table 3 on the following pages.

Table 3: Details of Participating Schools and Youthreach Centres

Area	Name of School or Youth Reach Centre	Type of Facility	Total School Size Estimate	Total Number of Youth in Age Range	Gender & Age of Youth	Absent & Youth Not Taking Part	Total Surveys Completed
D1	Lake View Secondary School	Girls Secondary School	275 Students	63	Gender: Male – 0 Female - 63 Age: 15 (16); 16 (29) 17 (13); 18+ (3)	2	4 th /T. Year (17) 5 th Year (46) 61 Total - 14.5% of Sample
D1	Seventh Street College	Mixed Secondary School	400 Students	18	Gender: Male – 18 Female - 0 Age: 15 (1); 16 (8) 17(7); 18+ (2)	0	5 th Year (18) 18 Total – 4.2% of Sample
D1	Youthreach A	Mixed Youthreach Centre	20 Youth	16	Gender: Male – 8 Female - 8 Age: 15 (2); 16 (9) 17 (5); 18+ (0)	0	15-17 Year Olds (16) 16 Total – 3.8% of Sample
D1	Youthreach B	Mixed Youthreach Centre	15 Youth	15	Gender: Male – 6 Female - 5 Age: 15 (2); 16(1) 17(4); 18+(4)	4	15-17 Year Olds (11) 11 Total – 2.6% of Sample
D1	O’Sullivan School	Mixed Secondary School	400 Students	35	Gender: Male – Female - Age: 15 (0); 16 (16) 17 (6); 18+ (0)	13	5 th Year (22) 22 Total - 5.2% of Sample
D2	West Secondary School	Mixed Secondary School	115 Students	13	Gender: Male – Female - Age: 15 (1); 16 (5) 17 (5); 18+ (0)	2	4 th /T. Year (0) 5 th Year (11) 11 Total – 2.6% of Sample
D7	Midvale School	Mixed Secondary School	175 Students	74	Gender: Male – Female - Age: 15 (7); 16 (35) 17 (21); 18+ (0) -	10	4 th /T. Year (35) 5 th Year (29) 64 Total - 15.2% of Sample

Area	Name of School or Youth Reach Centre	Type of Facility	Total School Size Estimate	Total Number of Youth in Age Range	Gender & Age of Youth	Absent & Youth Not Taking Part	Total Surveys Completed
D7	Richmond College	Boys Secondary School	650 Students	99	Gender: Male – 88 Female - 0 Age: 15 (16); 16 (15) 17 (21); 18+ (0)	11	4 th /T. Year (41) 5 th Year (47) 88 Total – 20.9% of Sample
D8	Hope Street College	Boys Secondary School	275 Students	28	Gender: Male – Female - Age: 15 (5); 16 (14) 17 (7); 18+ (0)	1	5 th Year (27) 27 Total – 6.4% of Sample
D8	Central Secondary School	Girls Secondary School	225 Students	42	Gender: Male – 0 Female - 36 Age: 15 (4); 16 (18) 17 (13); 18+ (0)	6	4 th /T. Year (25) 5 th Year (11) 36 Total – 8.6% of Sample
D8	Greenmount College	Girls Secondary School	325 Students	70*	Gender: Male – 0 Female - 45 Age: 15 (14); 16 (29) 17 (2); 18+ (0)	LCA*	5 th Year (45) 45 Total – 10.7% of Sample
D8	Youthreach C	Mixed Youthreach Centre	15 Youth	25	Gender: Male – 11 Female - 8 Age: 15 (1); 16 (6) 17 (6); 18+ (5)	6	15-17 Year Olds (19) 19 Total – 4.5% of Sample

NOTES: 1) Slight variations in Gender/Age/Total numbers are due to the fact that some youth left those questions blank. 2) Greenmount College offered the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) course. These (approximately 25) students were working off campus for the duration of the survey and were not available for participation.

5.3.3 Sampling Problems and Difficulties

The sampling procedure for this research project was rife with difficulty. Though the sampling involved in the localised study was much more favourable than the original nationwide study, it was not without its own problems.

The main problem was that a random probability sample was not obtained. The researcher did not attempt to achieve this type of sample after the difficulties encountered with the nationwide sample. Instead, all the schools and Youthreach centres in the target area were approached and asked to participate. Though this method was effective, problems arose when several schools and centres refused to participate. Since there were only 22 schools and centres in the area, the sample size ended up being smaller than anticipated when 10 of these decided not to participate.

Below is a table displaying the breakdown of schools that declined to participate in the research and the reason for this decision. These schools are not part of the sample:

Table 4: Schools that Declined to Participate

Area	Approximate Size	Name of School	Reason Given
D1	Around 875 Students	Belvedere College – All Boys	Unavailable
D2	Around 550 Students	Loreto College - All Girls	Unavailable
D7	Around 170 Students	Colaiste Eanna – Mixed	Too Busy
D7	Around 875 Students	St. Dominic’s College – All Girls	Involved In Too Much Research This Year
D7	Around 270 Students	St. Paul’s C.B.S. – All Boys	Involved In Too Much Research This Year
D8	Around 150 Students	St. Patricks Cathedral G.S. - Mixed	Involved In Too Much Research This Year

As mentioned previously, though the sample size ended up being smaller than originally envisioned, it was not cause for major concern. The thoroughness of the survey and a final sample size of 421 resulted in the avoidance of any major shortcomings for the project.

Now that the sample has been discussed, this chapter will turn to the exploration of the instruments and measures used in the research. The following section will discuss the survey in terms of both its design and structure, and will also detail the two scales used in the research, the Youth Victimization Experiences Scale (YVES) and the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS).

5.4 Instruments and Measures

5.4.1 The Survey: Structure and Design

Before the design of the survey took place, a comprehensive review of similarly-focused youth victimisation research was conducted. These studies were discussed in detail in Chapter 3. As stated previously, in terms of the influence of various theories on the design of the survey, Lifestyle Theory played a major role. Specifically, the eight propositions listed in *Victims of Personal Crime: An Empirical Foundation for a Theory of Personal Victimization* were reviewed in terms of their influence in determining risk factors for youth victimisation. Some of the propositions are more relevant than others, but all will be reviewed here, to facilitate the understanding of the theory's applicability to this research. The propositions outlined in Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo (1978) are summarised below. A paragraph describing how these propositions will be applied to the design of the survey, and the research overall, will follow the relevant summarised propositions:

Summary of Propositions 1 & 2: There is a direct relationship between the likelihood of a person experiencing a personal victimisation and the amount of time a person spends out in public places (particularly at night). Variations in lifestyle affect the likelihood of being in public places (particularly at night).

Application to Project (1 & 2):

These propositions will be addressed through asking youth questions about how they spend their free time. Questions will cover topics such as how much time is spent outside the home, who the majority of free time is spent with, where youth spend their free time, how often they go out during the weekends, and how many evenings/nights are spent outside the home. These questions will also act as a means to determining whether the lifestyles of youth support the proposition that being in public places more often, particularly at night, increases victimisation risk.

Summary of Propositions 3 & 4: There is a disproportionate amount of socialising that takes place among those who make similar lifestyle choices. Furthermore, the extent of shared demographic characteristics between victims and offenders are a factor in determining likelihood of personal victimization.

Application to Project (3 & 4):

These propositions will be addressed through asking youth about their experiences with youth crime and how many of their friends are involved in similar activities. Research has claimed that there are often similarities between victim and offender populations. The questionnaire designed for this research includes a line of questioning involving both youth offending and youth victimisation. Questions regarding safety issues and worry about crime in particular areas will provide further support in this area.

Summary of Propositions 5 & 6: Variations in lifestyle affect the amount of time spent among nonfamily members. The amount of time spent amongst nonfamily members increases the likelihood of victimisation, theft in particular.

Application to Project (5 & 6):

These propositions will be evaluated through questions regarding how youth spend their free time (as above) and also through questions regarding how involved their parents are in their lives. This research aims to determine if the level of parental supervision is relevant in determining youth victimisation risk. It would seem that the more time youth spend with nonfamily members and the less supervision youth receive from parents, the higher the risk of youth victimisation.

Summary of Proposition 7: Differing lifestyles are linked to differences in the ability to isolate oneself from those who have offender characteristics.

Application to Project (7):

This proposition has particular applicability to this project. One of the problems that youth face is that they cannot generally change who they spend the majority of time with. That is, the majority of their time (with individual exceptions) is spent at school. If youth are being victimised at school, there is very little that they can do about their situation, if they are not allowed to change schools. Questions focused on both who is victimising the youth the most and where the majority of these incidents occur. Inquiring into friends the youth have that they would consider ‘involved in youth crime’ will allow for more investigation into this proposition. For the reasons mentioned above and others, it is much harder for youth to disassociate than it is for adults.

Summary of Proposition 8: Differing lifestyles are linked with differences in the vulnerability, convenience, and desirability of a person as a target.

Application to Project (8):

Hindelang et al. have noted that “from the offender’s perspective, it is *convenient* to wait for a potential victim to come to a place (at a time) that is suitable to the offender for victimisation” (1978, p. 264). If youth are being victimised most often at school, they may be seen as a convenient, desirable, and vincible target. A student’s whereabouts are both predictable and convenient to a fellow student, and the fact that some students would not want to tell anyone about the incident due to factors such as embarrassment and/or fear of retribution further complicates matters. Also, if a youth does not have any friends or is smaller in stature than other students, his or her risks of victimisation may be raised further. Similarly, if youth are being victimised outside of school, several of these same factors would come into play and affect their victimisation risk. Or, if youth are involved in crime, they may be at a higher risk of victimisation due not only to the company they keep, but also due to the fact that potential offenders may see them as a more desirable target because of their probable reluctance to report any incidents to the police.

In a more general sense, how these propositions were applied to the survey design can be seen most clearly within the six general areas that were covered in the questionnaire. Each of these areas were designed to support the completion of the overriding aim of the research: the quantification of the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin, while also exploring youth victimisation in a broader sense. Three topics that were not included in this exploration were religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. The levels of ethnic and religious diversity within the sample were deemed too low for any meaningful comparison. The general areas that are covered in the questionnaire include the following:

- 1) **Background Information** – questions in this section focused on age, race, family, community, and living situations.
- 2) **Victimisation Experiences** – questions in this section focused on minor victimisation, property victimisation, violent victimisation (excluding sexual victimisation), possible reasons behind victimisation, and victimisation that family members had experienced. There was also a focus on how these experiences made young people feel, what effects they had on their lives, and who they told about these experiences.
- 3) **Offending Behaviour and Involvement in Youth Crime** – questions in this section focused on young people’s involvement in activities such as property damage, thefts, joyriding, vandalism, verbal threats, and physical altercations. There were also questions regarding whether the young people had been caught and whether their friends were involved in crime.
- 4) **How Free Time is Spent** – questions in this section focused on what type of activities young people engaged in during their free time, ranging from organised sports to hanging out with friends. There were also questions regarding who the young people spent their free time with.
- 5) **Parental Supervision** – questions in this section focused on whether young people were restricted in terms of who their friends were, what they did with their free time, where they were at night and when they were expected home, and whether they were required to answer mobile calls from their parent/guardian.

- 6) **Other Factors that Affect Young People’s Lives** - questions in this section focused on alcohol and drug use, worry about crime, safety, and attitudes towards the Gardaí.

The survey questioned young people about their experiences of criminal victimisation and offending behaviour during a particular time period. The researcher determined this time period in accordance with similar research. Many surveys issued in a school setting involve a period of six to twelve months prior to the study taking place. The reason such a short time period is generally used is due to issues such as general memory decay, as well as forward and/or backward telescoping. Telescoping can be described as the inability of respondents to accurately date victimisation events, due to the fact that they bring events that happened outside the specified period either forward or backward in time. Forward telescoping involves the respondent bringing events that happened before the specified period forward in time, resulting in an over-estimation of victimisations. On the other hand, backward telescoping involves the respondent shifting events that occurred during the specified period, backwards and consequently outside the ‘recall period’, resulting in an under-estimation of victimisations (Lavrakas, 2008). The importance of taking steps to avoid telescoping needs to be highlighted, because respondents over-estimating and under-estimating victimisations throughout a survey would obviously have detrimental effects on the results. The establishment of clear date boundaries is thought to help prevent telescoping. In this piece of research, “beginning of the summer break, June 2004” was used as the date boundary.

In addition to the creation of date boundaries, this questionnaire was designed specifically with youth respondents in mind, with a layout that attempted to reduce boredom and response error, while maximizing clarity. A variety of response formats

were used, including tables, scale-based questions, and open-ended questions. Italics and bold were also used to help guide respondents and simple language and short questions were used throughout. The complete questionnaire may be reviewed at Appendix A.

Now that an overview of the survey structure and design has been provided, the Youth Victimization Experience Scale and the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale will be discussed. Before this detailed discussion takes place, however, it is important to highlight the justification for creating novel scales in this research.

5.4.2 Justification for the Creation of Novel Scales

Hamburger, et al. (2011) have highlighted the fact that researchers “may find it challenging to identify which of the available measures is appropriate for assessing a particular bullying experience” and have created a compendium of psychometrically valid measures available to researchers that have met the strict criteria of being “published in a peer-reviewed journal or book, including psychometric information about the measure, when available” (p. 2). Though this compendium might be extremely helpful to researchers who want to use an existing scale to measure an existing facet of bullying or victimisation, it also highlights some of the inherent problems involved with the use of existing questionnaires and scales. A review of the compendium will quickly show that almost every scale features different measures, target age groups, time periods of interest, and most importantly, scoring instructions. All of these differences combined, support the need for researchers to develop their own scales and questionnaires, particularly when conducting localised research. Further problems and difficulties with the use of different measures, response formats, and scales have been summarized effectively in Thornton, et al. 2013 who state that:

The problem with using different measures with different response formats is that the results are not directly comparable as there will be different variance in the units of measurement for each variable, which introduces different elements of measurement error and bias. The problem with using scales with different numbers of items is that it is not possible to ascertain if the higher prevalence or frequency of offending is simply due to there being more items on that particular scale (p. 172).

Additional researchers have also noted that though there were other comprehensive measures available to use, they created their own scales to assess their specific areas of interest more effectively and overcome the various limitations involved in the use of existing measures and classifications (Borjesson, Aarons, & Dunn, 2003; Howard & Dixon, 2011; Jolliffe, D., & Farrington, D. P., 2006; Reavy, et al., 2012; Thornton, et al., 2013).

In terms of why it was necessary to create a new and novel scale for this research project, all of the above reasons applied to this research as well, and there were also a number of additional reasons. First, there were inherent limitations involved with the use of some of the existing questionnaires and scales, as these were developed for more wide-scale use and were designed specifically for a different strata of the population. Second, to date, a scale has not been designed specifically for an adolescent population living in this part of Dublin, as such, existing scales were not appropriate for this population in their current state. Third, a key objective of this study was accurate measurement of the experiences of this population, therefore, a specific scale was created for this purpose. Finally, an over-riding objective of all PhD projects is to do something original. Developing a novel scale for a particular population accomplished this objective.

5.4.3 The Youth Victimization Experience Scale (YVES)

The YVES is a twelve item self-report measure of youth victimisation. The YVES measured victimisation experiences within three major categories: minor victimisation experiences, property victimisation experiences, and violent victimisation experiences. Three items were used to measure minor victimisation experiences (laughed at, teased, called names) and four items were used to measure property victimisation experiences (bike stolen, mobile stolen, music player stolen, property damaged purposely). Violent victimisation experiences were measured by five items (threat to hurt, threat with weapon, hit for no reason, physical fight, and surrounded and hurt).

Participants were asked to rate how many times they had experienced each item since the beginning of the summer holidays by selecting either “Never”, “1-2 Times”, “3-4 Times”, “5-6 Times”, and “More Than 6 Times”. Responses were assigned a value from 1 (Never) to 5 (More Than 6 Times), with higher scores indicating higher levels of victimisation experiences.

5.4.4 The Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS)

The YOBS is an eight item self-report measure of youth offending behaviour. The YOBS measures offending behaviour within three major categories: property offending behaviour, theft offending behaviour, and violent offending behaviour. Two items were used to measure property offending behaviour (damaged property, broke windows) and three items were used to measure theft offending behaviour (stole a bike, broke in and stole, and stole a car/joyriding). Violent offending behaviour was measured by three items (been in a physical fight, threat to hurt, threat with weapon).

Participants were asked to rate how many times they had done each item since the beginning of the summer holidays by selecting either “Never”, “1-2 Times”, “3-4 Times”, “5-6 Times”, and “More Than 6 Times”. Responses were assigned a value from 1 (Never) to 5 (More Than 6 Times), with higher scores indicating higher levels of victimisation experiences.

Now that the survey structure and design has been provided, along with a description of the two scales used in the research, the procedures will be discussed.

5.5 Procedures

5.5.1 Piloting – Evaluating the Pilot and Updating the Survey

Piloting of the project was performed at two designated disadvantaged secondary schools in Dublin. This was appropriate due to the fact that the majority of young people in the project sample would be from disadvantaged areas and would probably have similar educational and social backgrounds. Two classes from each school participated in the pilot project, resulting in a piloting sample of four classes total, with approximately 100 boys and girls participating. Participant ages ranged from 15-17 years old, in keeping with the age range of the project.

Analysis of the pilot questionnaires was extremely helpful in determining which elements of the questionnaire design needed to be reconsidered entirely and which needed only minor alterations. The pilot results were closely examined to assess the

⁵ Designated Disadvantaged schools are part of the Disadvantaged Area Schools Scheme, established in 1984. These schools receive additional support from the Department of Education, in the form of additional finance and in some cases, additional staff. This Scheme was created in an effort to address the problem of educational disadvantage in areas with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils.

clarity, ease, and usefulness of the questionnaire in exploring youth victimisation and offending. Several changes were made to the questionnaire after the initial piloting of the instrument. The main changes that were made to the questionnaire involved wording, clarity, structure, and sensitivity. All of these changes will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

There was only one structural change to the questionnaire, which involved not splitting it into actual sections. This was changed after reviewing several draft versions and the pilot study results. It was decided that the young people did not need to know what the title of each section was in order to answer the questions. Furthermore, dividing the questionnaire was making it longer than necessary.

There were only three changes made in terms of the wording used in the questionnaire. Respondents appeared to be confused over the meaning of “ethnic origin”. The question was changed to ask about “background”, and the most common ethnic origins found in Ireland were used as choices. For the purposes of this project, it was felt that the use of “background” in this manner would suffice. The term “disposable income” also appeared to be confusing for some respondents. This question was later changed to one asking how much money respondents have to spend each week after expenses, examples of which were listed. However, it was eventually changed again to ask how much money respondents had to spend each week in terms of pocket money, bus/train/luas fare, and lunch money. Though this information would have been interesting for further examination and discussion, in the end, it was not analysed due to the problems with understanding (even after several revisions) and the failure of many students to answer the question.

In terms of clarity of questions, there were a few problems. There were several questions regarding how respondents spent their free time. Many of these questions used the phrase “go out” quite loosely. The point was raised that it was unclear whether the questions referred to going out drinking, or simply going out with friends and so on. As a result, the questions were changed to ask how often respondents hang out with friends with no supervision from adults, who they spend their free time with, and a section was also added concerning substance abuse and the extent of such abuse.

Finally, in terms of sensitivity due to language used, it was originally overlooked that a respondent might be offended or hurt by the term ‘parent’ being used as the only option for the caregiver role. The questionnaire has since been altered and the term has been replaced by ‘parent/guardian’.

It is clear how useful the piloting phase is during questionnaire design. However, it is important to note that the piloting stage is also invaluable for researchers during the data collection phase. Piloting a project allows researchers to know what to expect during data collection, and also, how to take steps to avoid potential pitfalls.

5.5.2 Data Collection Procedures

It was originally envisioned that the data collection stage would begin at the beginning of the 2004 school year and would be completed by the Christmas break. However, due to the sampling problems discussed in Section 5.3.3, this was not the case. The timing of a research project is often crucial to its success. Since the survey was to be issued to young people in a school setting, it was decided to use a simple school-year related timeframe to aid memory and cut down on telescoping, or the inability of respondents to accurately date victimisation events, which was discussed earlier. The summer “June 2004” was used to mark the beginning of the timeframe the young

people were questioned about. All surveys were conducted during April and May of 2005, allowing for the inclusion of the previous nine months in the survey timeframe.

5.5.3 Timing and Procedures for Conducting the Survey

Despite the fact that this project was scaled down in size, the data collection process still ended up taking several months to complete. This was due to the numerous steps involved in the data collection process, which will be detailed in the following paragraphs.

The first and most time-consuming step was contacting all principals for permission to enter their school and distribute the questionnaire to their students. Individual letters were mailed to each principal, follow-up letters were then drafted and sent, and after the initial contact, project materials were sent out. The difficulty arose when initial contact could not be made. In several instances, the researcher had to accept that schools were not willing to participate, based only on their reluctance to respond to numerous phone calls, faxes, and letters.

The steps taken after principals agreed to participate were simple and were not excessively time-consuming⁶. The number of fourth/transition and fifth year students attending the school was determined, and then the envelopes containing the parental consent forms were mailed to the schools. After address labels were affixed to these envelopes (by the schools), they were sent to all parents/guardians, who were then given one week to withdraw their child from the study. The next step involved arranging a time to visit the school and issue the questionnaire to the students, which took approximately forty minutes to complete.

⁶ Appendix E details the exact instructions that were given to the principals as part of the Survey Procedure for School Secretaries/Principals document.

Previous experience issuing surveys in a school setting was particularly helpful in making the researcher aware of the difficulties involved in contacting principals and gaining access to schools. However, this project was unique in that it did not have something tangible to offer those involved in the study, and thus, enjoyed a much lower level of participation from schools. Everyone would like to think that those in education would be interested in facilitating research, and that it would be fairly easy to get access to schools. However, the reality is quite different. Unfortunately, a postgraduate student doing an individual research project has very little to offer the principal and the school, thus, many schools decline to participate in these types of research projects. Another factor is the increase in research projects involving schools. Some schools had already participated in three research projects in 2005 alone. This was the most common reason that schools declined to participate in this study, as can be seen in Table 4, which describes those schools that declined to participate.

In hindsight, it became obvious that the timing of this project might have impacted participation rates. Despite the fact that most surveys issued in a school setting are issued either at the beginning or at the end of the school year, issuing the survey at the end of the year proved to be problematic. In the following section, the problems surrounding conducting the actual survey will be discussed in more detail.

5.5.4 Procedural Problems and Difficulties

In addition to the numerous sampling problems described in Section 5.3.3, there were also several problems encountered during the data collection and data entry phases. During the data collection phase of the research, most problems were associated with access and participation, while during the data entry phase, most problems were

associated with the use of the Remark software. In the following paragraphs, these problems will be discussed in detail.

During the data collection phase, there were problems involving both access to principals and gaining participation from schools and YouthReach centres. It was often difficult to even obtain access to the principals in order to discuss the research project. Some schools had a school secretary, while others did not, relying on administrative staff or often forwarding calls to the staff room instead. It is obviously easier when the same person is answering the phone every time, particularly when a person is calling so often that their name is remembered. In these cases, the researcher found that persistence paid off. However, when calls are forwarded to the staff room, several people may answer the calls and take messages, leading to doubts as to whether or not the school principal ever received them. Follow-up letters were also sent to all principals reminding them about the project and that the researcher would be phoning them. Despite the fact that sending the information via post seemed to provide more promise with the majority of principals, some principals did not remember receiving any information about the project.

All in all, there were vast differences in both the responses from schools and the difficulty in obtaining access to principals. Some principals phoned back immediately, with a response, while others required many phone calls and letters before they would even phone back. The worst cases were those principals that stated that they would have a response shortly and to please phone back. In these cases, phoning and leaving messages went on for months, until the school year ran out. On the other hand, there were some principals who were very interested in participating in the research, despite

the fact that they seemed to honestly not receive messages/post. Despite the difficulty in contacting these principals, in these cases, the schools did end up participating.

Gaining access to principals was a problem in itself, but convincing schools to participate was another matter entirely. Principals often wanted time to think about whether or not their school would participate, understandably. However, there were other cases where meetings were held and the topic was discussed with school counsellors, only to claim in the end, that there were not enough young people in the target age group to merit involvement in the research, or that the school was too busy.

Again, there were large differences in the difficulty involved in gaining each school's participation. It was interesting that the most high profile schools in the area both said no, very politely, within one day of receiving the initial project letter. It was also notable that some principals thought it would be better to not respond for months, instead of simply saying no. It was felt that attempts to contact should continue, until a principal said no. To this end, every school was called and written to, repeatedly, until a response was given. This obviously does not include the two schools that let the school year run out, in lieu of making contact.

The problems encountered during the data collection phase were time-consuming but fairly easy to deal with. However, the problems encountered during the data entry stage were not only time-consuming, but also, extremely difficult to deal with.

Remark is an innovative software package that allows researchers to upload entire data sets into SPSS for analysis. The process involves creating a survey template, scanning all surveys into Remark, and then uploading the data set into SPSS for analysis. The problems lie in the fact that the template design and ease of scanning are entirely reliant

on the original questionnaire design. In other words, if the design of the questionnaire does not take place in conjunction with the template design, the risk of incompatibility is very high. It is not that the software will not eventually work. It is a matter of how much time it takes to make it work, and even then, how much information has to be checked and entered manually afterwards. In the case of this research project, the software eventually worked; however, it ended up taking longer and causing more problems than if the data had been entered into SPSS manually.

Research problems and ethical considerations are two areas that need to be handled carefully in research. This chapter will now turn to exploring various ethical considerations.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

This project received clearance from the DIT Ethics Committee and was informed by the Code of Ethical Conduct produced by the Psychological Society of Ireland. Specifically, this research has followed standard protocols for ethical research, including fully briefing subjects prior to administering the questionnaire, stressing that participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time, and informing subjects that all responses are anonymous and confidential. The research was also informed by the Code of Ethics and Conduct produced by the British Psychological Society and followed the ethical principles stated within it. At all times, the researcher showed Respect, Competence, Responsibility, and Integrity, as stated by the BPS. The research was also informed by the British Sociological Association. The researcher reviewed the association's statement of ethical practice and followed the guidelines mentioned within it, particularly in terms of Professional Integrity, Relations with and Responsibilities toward Research Participants, and Anonymity, Privacy, and

Confidentiality. Furthermore, the research followed the ethical framework provided by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in following its three core ethical concepts, namely: minimising risk of harm; obtaining informed consent and assent; and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity (2012).

Finally, the requisite DIT consent form was used with participants, and though not required by the DIT Ethics committee, the researcher sought both parental and participant consent. Consent issues will be discussed further in the following section.

5.6.1 Age and Consent

Since the all of the young people involved in this research were 15-17 years old, parental consent was obtained for all participants. Due to the fact that the content of the survey did not pose any harm to participants and consent was not required in the first place, this was considered a strong reason against the use of active consent. Passive consent was used in lieu of active consent, for several other reasons. First, active consent would have been extremely difficult to obtain, especially for a researcher working alone. Second, seeking active consent could result in a lower participation rate, due to the fact that some parents would inevitably forget to return the consent form. In these instances, the researcher would have no choice but to exclude the young person from the study, even if the parents did not actually have a problem with their participation. Finally, obtaining passive consent was the better option for this project, as it allowed parents and guardians to be notified about the project in a straightforward way, while also giving them ample opportunity to withdraw their child from the study. In addition to the aforementioned reasons, previous research provided further support for the decision to use passive consent. Range, et al., 2001 highlight the fact that research projects that use passive consent have been found to involve more subjects,

achieve higher response rates, and are more likely to be conducted in schools (Range, et al., 2001). While research undertaken by Ellickson, et al. (1989) provides further support, highlighting some of the practical benefits to passive consent. They discovered that though the vast majority of parents received the consent materials in the post, there were difficulties around making sure that they actually paid attention to what the materials mentioned. Despite this shortcoming, they found that parents who did not respond to passive consent were actually consciously granting their approval. The decision to use passive consent over active consent was based on the above benefits to using this type of consent, previous research, and the knowledge that obtaining active consent has been associated with lower participation rates and an under-representation of at risk youth (Esbensen, et al., 1999).

The researcher also received active consent from all participants. An oral overview of the project was given to all potential participants, who were then given the opportunity to ask questions. After all questions were answered, participants were asked to read the consent form and then sign and date it, if they wished to participate. The consent form can be reviewed at Appendix H. If a young person did not wish to participate in the study, they could either work on something else or leave the room.

Most young people did not have any problems filling out the questionnaire, but there were a few isolated incidents where assistance and guidance was needed. These provisions will be discussed in more detail, in the next section.

5.6.2 Assistance and Guidance

The majority of guidance occurred before the young people started filling out the questionnaire. This included going over a few areas that students (at the first school to

fill out the questionnaire) had identified as difficult. These areas were written down so that the same exact guidance could be given to students at the following school. Some researchers claim that no guidance should be given to participants once they begin filling out the questionnaire, due to reliability concerns. However, if the guidance is exactly the same in every instance, it would be difficult to argue that this is in any way different than written guidance. The ideal situation is to have a questionnaire that is very clear to everyone. However, sometimes this is impossible to obtain and guidance is necessary.

Along with the group guidance that was provided, the researcher was also available throughout the class period to answer any individual questions that arose. Luckily, these questions were limited, validating the general ease students had in filling out the questionnaire. There were a few isolated incidents involving young people needing one-to-one assistance throughout the questionnaire. In these incidents, low literacy rates were always the problem. This was a difficult situation for the researcher as it raised the issue of privacy and protection of privacy for the participants. It is commonly accepted that some participants have difficulty with disclosing personal information that they may deem as either being sensitive or private or both (Tourangeau & Smith, 1996; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). Research has shown that assurances as to how this information will be used may put participants minds at ease. Onsembe (2002) has noted that the confidence participants have in the way that their responses will be handled is of vital importance as an indicator of whether sensitive questions will be answered or not. All of these issues were considered when dealing with the youth that needed assistance, as there was the obvious possibility that lots of questions would be deemed as sensitive/private, with an adult (providing literacy assistance) having direct access to the young people's

responses to these questions. As such, the privacy/sensitivity issue was double-edged in these cases. On one hand, drawing further attention to the fact that the young person could not read very well could be harmful to them, while on the other hand, having an adult see the answers to the questionnaire could be equally harmful.

In the end, the decision was made to approach each of these individuals and let them know that the researcher could go over the questions with them individually instead, so that their anonymity and confidentiality of answers would be assured. In all cases, the young people stated that they did not mind if the adult knew their answers and were fine with the situation. This was probably due to the fact that all of the young people were quite close to these adults, because the same adults helped them with their reading on a daily, one-to-one basis. There was one case where the researcher chose to read the questionnaire out to the entire group. This was decided upon because the literacy levels of all four young people were questionable and the adult with them did not usually help them on a daily basis.

All in all, the cases of young people needing guidance and assistance were very limited, as is reflected in the examples mentioned above. This is probably due to the effective piloting of the study, which allowed for several changes to be made, before the survey was conducted in schools. An age-appropriate literacy skill level was all that was needed in order to complete the survey and the lower literacy levels were never low enough to merit a student not participating in the research. There were also no cases where English being a student's second language became problematic. Furthermore, it was not necessary to consider the data obtained from the low-literacy group separately, as it was reviewed at the time of completion and was seen to be just as comprehensive as the full-literacy students, making separate analysis unnecessary.

5.7 Reflecting on the Research Process

When conducting any type of research, and particularly research that involves fieldwork, it is always important to reflect back on any and all factors that might have impacted on the research, whether individual or environmental in nature. This section will provide reflection on both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the research, even though the qualitative element is not discussed until Chapter 9, since both elements involve working with young people and are conducted in identical settings.

Conducting research in a school setting can lead to problems. However, for both the survey research and the focus group research, the environmental surroundings did not affect the research data. In both cases, students were taking part voluntarily and were escorted into quiet rooms that were reserved specifically for the survey or the focus groups. The surveys were conducted in the classroom setting and the focus groups were conducted in unused classrooms or school meeting rooms. All participants' confidentiality were ensured based on the privacy of either the survey setting (room with individual desks) or the focus group setting (room allocated for the sole use of the focus groups).

In terms of individual factors impacting the research, gender was not an issue during the course of the research. This was likely due to a combination of factors. Firstly, that students are used to dealing with females, as the majority of teachers in Ireland are in fact female, due to the definitive shift in the gender of second levels teachers from 50-50 in 1985 to 60-40 in 2003 (TUI, 2007). Secondly, that the female students probably felt more comfortable speaking to someone of their same gender.

All students were also informed throughout the research that I was also in fact a student, and that the research I was conducting was part of my degree programme.

Initially, there was concern that my level of education could result in a distance between myself and the students, but there was absolutely no evidence of this. In fact, it was often felt that there was a relationship between us, based on our identical status as students. When possible, it was briefly mentioned that I had previously conducted research with students in other parts of Dublin, and in Kildare and Meath, which seemed to put the students at ease. This could have been due to the fact that inner-city youth are over-researched and sometimes seem keenly aware of this fact. The fact that I had conducted research with students in other parts of the country seemed to give the young people confidence that I was not only interested in them because of the area they lived in. It also offered them reassurance that I was interested in youth research generally and had experience and a true interest in learning more about youth views in a general sense.

Before the research began, I was aware of the fact that my American nationality could be problematic, as the vast majority of participants were Irish. However, if anything, my nationality seemed to help, instead of hinder the research process. The fact that I was American seemed to interest the young people and seemed to make them more relaxed. There were even a handful of cases where students became rather excited by my research, thinking that I worked for the FBI in the United States. Unfortunately, there were a few other cases where a bit of time had to be spent explaining that I did not work as a CSI, like the television show. In those cases, the young people seemed rather unimpressed and bored by my status as a simple student, but not so much so that they declined to participate.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of the research design and the rationale behind the choice of design. The aims of the research were expanded on and the key research questions were identified. The development of the YVES and the YOBS, psychometrically valid and practically useful self-report measures of youth victimisation and offending experiences, were also detailed. Finally, the various methodological difficulties encountered during the course of the research were explored and a reflexive look back was provided. In summary, this chapter explored the overall research design, participants, instruments and measures used, procedures, and ethical considerations. The next chapter will detail the survey findings and will explore demographic information, crime in the neighbourhood, frequency, differences for victimisation and offending, and also, young people's thoughts and opinions on their experiences.

Chapter 6: Survey Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter quantifies the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending experiences and provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample, including gender, age, ethnic origin, living situation, adults working in the home, and area information. The findings were split into categories of victimisation (minor, property, violent) and offending (vandalism, theft, violent). Once categorised, victimisation and offending incidents were explored in terms of frequency, and later in the chapter, by differences amongst groups. Family victimisation and crime in the neighbourhood were also explored. Finally, how young people felt about their experiences and the Gardaí was covered, along with curfews and how free time was usually spent by the sample.

6.2 Demographic Information

The sample breakdown is representative of the young people attending local schools and YouthReach centres in the area, in that the majority in this age range are 16 years old, there are almost the same amount of girls and boys, and there is only a small percentage of ethnic diversity. It should be noted that the ethnic diversity in this area is not representative of that in other areas in Dublin. For example, there are approximately thirty different ethnicities represented in some of the schools in Dublin 15, in the west of the city.

6.2.1 Gender, Age and Ethnic Origin

The sample comprised 219 Males (52%) and 202 Females (48%). By age, the sample was as follows: 15 Year Olds (16%), 16 Year Olds (53%), 17 Year Olds (26%), and Other 5%. The vast majority of the sample described themselves as Irish (89%), with self-ascribed Africans making up 4% of the sample, Eastern Europeans making up 3% of the sample, Irish Travellers making up 1% of the sample, and the rest of the sample being made up by Other (3%).

6.2.2 Living Situation

Dublin 1-2-7-8 is a predominantly disadvantaged area. Of the twelve settings involved in this study six were schools that were Designated Disadvantaged by the Department of Education, three were Youthreach Centres located in disadvantaged areas, and only three participating schools were not Designated Disadvantaged. This research did not seek to establish the socioeconomic status among the sample further, for two reasons. First, it was decided that the majority of scales used for this purpose could have been unduly difficult for youth to understand, based on the vagueness of some of the commonly used employment terms, for example ‘skilled worker’ and ‘semi-skilled worker’, which might have caused confusion for young people. Furthermore, some of the scales would be largely inaccurate in Ireland’s changing economy over the last decade. Though it might have been easy to establish the difference in socioeconomic status between a professional worker and a tradesman in several points in history, this has not always been the case. For example, in the years of the Celtic Tiger, many of those working in the building trade were more financially secure than their professional counterparts, making this commonly used factor in determining socio-economic status useless.

Despite the fact that the research did not seek to establish socioeconomic status among the sample, the living arrangements of the sample were thoroughly investigated. This was achieved through establishing household composition, numbers of working adults in the home, type of housing, local area details, and the usual way that young people travelled to school.

The living arrangements of the sample varied from living with both parents, to living with friends or alone in a room. However, the majority of the sample (64%) lived with both of their parents and only a small percentage did not live with either parent (10%). Furthermore, in most of these cases the young person was living with a relative (4%), when not living with parents. The number of young people living in a single-parent household was quite high with 24% living with a single mother and 2% living with a single father. The majority of households (90%) from which the sample was drawn contained at least one adult in paid employment, while only 10% of the sample reported having no adult in paid employment. In addition, almost half of the households had two adults working in the home (49%). The table below details both the living arrangements and number of adults working in the home:

Table 5: *Living Situation and Employment Levels in the Home*

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Living		
With Mother	383	95.8%
With Father	282	79.9%
With Brother	249	78.8%
With Sister	253	80.8%
With Others	61	14.5%

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Employment		
None Working	41	10.0%
1 Person Working	167	40.6%
2+ People Working	203	49.4%

In terms of types of housing, the majority of the sample living in Dublin 1 and Dublin 2, lived in council housing, 74% in both cases, while 31% of Dublin 7 and 51% of Dublin 8 sample residents lived in council housing. Interestingly, none of the Dublin 15 and commuter residents lived in this type of housing. The following table presents a detailed cross tabulation of sample housing:

Table 6: Types of Housing

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Council Housing</i>	<i>Privately Owned Flat/Apartment</i>	<i>Privately Owned House</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Dublin 1	46	4	7	5	62	15%
Dublin 2	14	1	2	2	19	5%
Dublin 7	38	4	76	4	122	30%
Dublin 8	43	6	34	2	85	21%
Dublin 15	0	0	23	1	24	6%
N. Dublin	22	1	15	1	39	10%
S. Dublin	16	1	19	0	36	9%
Commuter	0	0	16	1	17	4%
Total	179	17	192	16	404	100%

Though 71% of the sample lived in the study area, young people from all over the Dublin and surrounding areas attended schools in Dublin 1-2-7-8. Specifically, 6% of

the sample came from the Dublin 15 area, while 10% came from North Dublin postcodes and 9% from South Dublin postcodes. The remaining 4% of the sample came from Dublin county and other commuter counties. As might be expected given the proximity of the school to home for most of the sample, 58% walked to school, 28% used public transport, and 6% were dropped off by adults. The remainder of the sample either used a combination of the above or some other means of transportation.

Now that the living situations of the sample have been explored and the areas in which the sample live have been identified, the chapter will turn to an investigation of victimisation amongst family members and crime in the various neighbourhoods.

6.3 Family Victimization and Crime in the Neighbourhood

Respondents were asked how many times their family had been victimised, since the beginning of the summer holidays prior to the current school year. There were varying degrees of this type of victimisation. The three most common incidents reported by the sample (that happened at least once) were a family member being hit or beaten up while outside of the home (19%), a sibling being bullied at school (21%), the home being vandalized (10%) or any family property being damaged (21%). All other incidents were reported by less than 10% of the sample. Table 7 details the incidents:

Table 7: Frequency of Family Victimization

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Family Member Hurt		
Never	333	81.0%
1-2 Times	65	15.8%
More than 3 Times	13	3.2%

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Sibling Bullied at School		
Never	325	79.5%
1-2 Times	61	14.9%
More than 3 Times	23	5.6%
Home Vandalized		
Never	368	90.0%
1-2 Times	35	8.6%
More than 3 Times	6	1.4%
Family Property Damaged		
Never	324	78.6%
1-2 Times	75	18.2%
More than 3 Times	13	3.2%

Respondents were also asked about crime in their neighbourhood. These questions addressed break-ins, car theft, vandalism, graffiti, and gunshots being fired in the area. On average, only 10% of the sample had experienced a family car theft or their home being broken into. Unsurprisingly, 51% of the sample reported their neighbourhood being sprayed with graffiti, but only 10% of the sample had also experienced their family home being vandalized. However, the most alarming finding was that 40% of the sample had heard gunshots being fired in their area at least once, and 16% had experienced this more than three times. Respondents in Dublin 1, Dublin 7, and Dublin 8 had the highest numbers of reported gunshots with an average of 36 gunshots reported per area. It should be noted that due to the manner in which the gunshot data was obtained, it is impossible to know exactly how many actual gunshots happened versus how many of the same gunshots were merely heard and reported by multiple respondents, which can be misleading. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that

there is no way of knowing if respondents actually heard gunshots or if they simply heard something that could have been gunshots, such as a car back-firing. However, it is interesting to note that the lowest number of gunshots were reported in the Dublin County and commuter areas, areas where multiple gunshots might be attributed to hunters, unlike the city-centre.

6.4 Frequency Results

6.4.1 Types of Victimization Investigated

Various types of victimisation experiences were investigated in this study. The only types of victimisation that were completely omitted were those of a sexual nature and those involving abuse within the home. Unfortunately, these areas had to be neglected for several reasons:

1. Anonymity and Confidentiality

The anonymity of the sample and the confidentiality of their responses could not be ensured if there was a potential risk of a participant divulging information that must be reported to social services. This risk would be particularly high if questions involving abuse and sexual victimisation were included in the study. Though only the school would be known to the researcher, not individual students or their identities, it was still felt that problems could arise from the inclusion of questions of this nature, so they were left out of the study all together.

2. Further Assistance

The questionnaire administered in this study was carefully structured to avoid upsetting or harming the participants in any way. Nevertheless, a list of helpful numbers was provided to each participant, in case they wanted to discuss any

issues with a youth worker or trained professional. This list can be reviewed at Appendix J. If sexual victimisation of any sort had been considered in this study, the researcher felt that further assistance would need to be guaranteed for the participants. Due to financial constraints, this would have been impossible.

3. Protection for the Researcher

Finally, there had to be a measure of protection ensured for the researcher who would have been legally obligated to assist in any investigation. This is of particular concern, as participant anonymity may not stop a school from looking into issues on a broader, classroom-based level. If this were to occur, the researcher felt as though the protection of participants' anonymity would be severely compromised.

For the purposes of analysis and discussion, the victimisation experiences that were investigated in this study have been split into three categories: Minor Victimization Experiences, Property Victimization Experiences, and Violent Victimization Experiences. In the following sections, each of these categories will be discussed. The reader will recall that these experiences cover a period of some nine months.

6.4.2 Frequency of Minor Victimization Experiences

Minor victimisation experiences were the sum of the following incident types: being laughed at, teased, and called names, these being among the categories used in the questionnaire. It is important to note that Minor Victimization incidents included both those of a bullying nature and those incidents that represented challenges through joking, teasing or reprimand from other group members to conform. Though further differentiation between these incident types would have been interesting, this would have minimised the category as a whole, in comparison to the other two types of

victimisation (Property Victimisation and Violent Victimisation) making comparative analysis amongst the three overall victimisation types problematic. Table 8 below shows that all three types of minor victimisation experiences were reported frequently. Fifty-six percent of the sample reported being laughed at, 42% of the sample reported being teased, and almost 60% of the sample reported being called names. It is also important to note that there were high levels of repeat minor victimisation experiences reported in all three categories. The highest levels of repeat victimisation were reported by young people experiencing being called names, with 16% of the sample reporting having been called names more than six times. Thirteen percent of the sample reported being laughed at more than six times, and almost 10% of the sample reported being teased more than six times. Overall, the levels of minor victimisation experiences were quite high, as were the levels of repeat minor victimisation experiences.

Table 8: Frequency of Minor Victimisation Experiences

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Laughed At		
Never	179	43.8%
1-2 Times	120	29.3%
More than 3 Times	110	26.9%
Teased		
Never	235	57.9%
1-2 Times	97	23.9%
More than 3 Times	74	18.2%
Called Names		
Never	167	41.3%
1-2 Times	119	29.5%
More than 3 Times	118	29.2%

6.4.3 Frequency of Property Victimization Experiences

Property victimisation experiences were the sum of the following incident types: having a bike stolen, mobile stolen, music player stolen, and property damaged on purpose, these being among the categories used in the questionnaire. Table 9 details the frequency of property victimisation experiences that were reported by the sample. Compared to minor victimisation experiences, property victimisation experiences were low. The experiences that was reported least often were having a music player stolen (2%) and having a bike stolen (5%). A possible explanation for low levels of music players being stolen might be that many young people use their mobiles for music purposes as well and would not own a separate device for the sole purpose of playing music. Of the three different types of property victimisation reported, having property damaged on purpose was reported most often, with 20% of the sample reporting this, followed by almost 15% reporting having a mobile stolen. It is also important to note that there were not high levels of repeat property victimisation experiences reported in any of the three categories. In fact, only property damage was reported to have happened more than six times, and even then, only 1% of the sample reported this. Overall, the levels of property victimisation experiences reported were low.

Table 9: Frequency of Property Victimization Experiences

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Bike Stolen		
Never	387	94.6%
1-2 Times	22	5.4%
Mobile Stolen		
Never	354	85.5%
1-2 Times	58	14.0%

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
More than 3 Times	2	0.5%
Music Player Stolen		
Never	403	97.8%
1-2 Times	8	1.9%
More than 3 Times	1	0.2%
Property Damaged Purposely		
Never	330	80.1%
1-2 Times	67	16.3%
More than 3 Times	15	3.6%

6.4.4 Frequency of Violent Victimization Experiences

Violent victimisation experiences were the sum of the following incident types: receiving threats to hurt, receiving threats with a weapon, being hit for no reason, being in a physical fight, and finally, being surrounded by a group and hurt. Table 10 on the following page details the frequency of violent victimisation experiences that were reported by the sample. In comparison to minor and property victimisation experiences, violent victimisation experiences were high. Of the five different types of violent victimisation reported, being in a physical fight was reported most often, with 43% of the sample reporting this, followed by 34% reporting threats to hurt.

Table 10: Frequency of Violent Victimization Experiences

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Threat to Hurt		
Never	270	65.9%
1-2 Times	101	24.6%
More than 3 Times	39	9.6%
Threat with Weapon		
Never	355	86.4%
1-2 Times	42	10.2%
More than 3 Times	14	3.4%
Hit for No Reason		
Never	306	74.3%
1-2 Times	82	19.9%
More than 3 Times	24	5.8%
Physical Fight		
Never	238	57.5%
1-2 Times	103	24.9%
More than 3 Times	73	17.7%
Group Surrounded & Hurt		
Never	379	92.2%
1-2 Times	27	6.6%
More than 3 Times	5	1.2%

As the table above shows, a large percentage of the sample reported experiencing violent victimisation. Alarmingly, 14% had been threatened by someone holding an object that could be used as a weapon. In terms of verbal threats to hurt, 34% of the sample had suffered at least one, while almost 10% had received three or more, and 8% reported being surrounded by a group and hurt. The frequency of victimisation incidents involving physical violence was also quite high, considering the relative

brevity of the period covered. A relatively high proportion of the sample reported being hit for no reason (26%), with 6% of the sample reporting that this had happened more than 3 times. Similarly, 43% of the sample reported being in a physical fight, with 18% reporting having been in 3 or more fights.

Now that the frequency of minor, property, and violent victimisation experiences have been discussed, this chapter will turn to detailing the frequency of offending behaviour. Three types of offending behaviour will be covered: vandalism offending behaviour, theft offending behaviour, and violent offending behaviour.

6.5 Frequency Results: Offending

6.5.1 Types of Offending Investigated

Various types of offending behaviour were investigated in this study. These included vandalism offending behaviour, theft offending behaviour, and violent offending behaviour. The only types of offending that were completely omitted were those of a sexual nature and those involving abuse within the home. As mentioned in Section 6.4.1, these areas were excluded for a host of reasons.

6.5.2 Frequency of Vandalism Offending Behaviour

Vandalism offending behaviour was the sum of the following incident types: damaging property and breaking windows. Table 11 shows the frequency of vandalism offending behaviour. Damaging property was reported by 42% of the sample, while only 15% of the sample reported breaking windows. Furthermore, low levels of repeat offending behaviour were reported for both types of vandalism offending. Only 4% of the sample

reported breaking windows three or more times, while 16% of the sample reported damaging property more than three times.

Table 11: Frequency of Vandalism Offending Behaviour

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Damaged Property		
Never	240	57.8%
1-2 Times	107	25.8%
More than 3 Times	68	16.3%
Broke Windows		
Never	349	84.5%
1-2 Times	46	11.1%
More than 3 Times	18	4.3%

6.5.3 Frequency of Theft Offending Behaviour

Theft offending behaviour was the sum of the following incident types: stealing a bike, breaking-in and stealing, and stealing a car or going joyriding. Table 12 details the frequency of theft offending behaviour. The levels of overall theft offending behaviour were low and are much lower in comparison to the vandalism offending behaviour mentioned above. Only approximately 5% of the sample reported stealing a bike, breaking-in and stealing, and joyriding. In all cases of theft offending behaviour, the majority of the sample had never taken part in this type of behaviour.

Table 12: Frequency of Theft Offending Behaviour

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Stole Bike		
Never	389	93.7%
1-2 Times	18	4.3%
More than 3 Times	8	1.9%
Broke-In & Stole		
Never	397	95.4%
1-2 Times	14	3.4%
More than 3 Times	5	1.2%
Joyride/Stole Car		
Never	396	95.2%
1-2 Times	9	2.2%
More than 3 Times	11	2.7%

6.5.4 Frequency of Violent Offending Behaviour

Finally, there were quite high levels of violent offending behaviour reported by the sample. Twenty-eight per cent of the sample reported being in a fight 1-2 times, 40% reported making verbal threats, and almost 10% of the sample reported making verbal threats with a weapon. In comparison with the other types of offending behaviour, the levels of repeat violent offending behaviour were similarly low. Only 7% of the sample had been in a fight more than five times, while 5% of the sample reported making verbal threats more than five times, and only 2% of the sample had made threats with a weapon. All of the above are detailed in Table 13 on the following page:

Table 13: Frequency of Violent Offending Behaviour

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Fight		
Never	235	56.9%
1-2 Times	114	27.6%
More than 3 Times	64	15.5%
Verbal Threat		
Never	251	60.5%
1-2 Times	119	28.7%
More than 3 Times	45	10.9%
Threat with Weapon		
Never	378	91.3%
1-2 Times	28	6.8%
More than 3 Times	8	1.9%

6.6 Victimization: Thoughts, Opinions and Effects

6.6.1 The Victimization Incidents that Bothered Young People the Most

The sample was asked “Of all the experiences mentioned [nominate] the one that bothered you the most”. Having established the range of victimisations experienced in the group, it was felt important to prioritise them in terms of impact. The most troublesome behaviours by frequency were being laughed at or teased. These were closely followed by being in a physical fight. Of course, one can only designate an event as most bothersome if one has experienced it. For example, had more respondents been in fights, fighting may have featured more prominently as most bothersome.

Young people varied in both whether they told and whom they told about their

nominated most bothersome incidents. Of the 243 young people who told someone about the incident that bothered them the most, at least one person was an adult in 141 of the cases. Conversely, 102 of the young people told only another young person about their most bothersome incident. The remaining 178 told no-one.

For ease of interpretation, a threshold of 20 cases⁷ was established for inclusion in the ensuing analysis of most bothersome events. The table below provides a breakdown of the top incident types, which young people claimed bothered them the most, the proportion of young people who told someone about the respective incidents, where the incidents happened, and who performed the incidents against the young people.

Table 14: Incident that Bothered Young People the Most

Incidents	% of Young People Who Reported Incident As Bothering Them The Most	% of Young People (Column 1) Who Told Someone About The Incident	Where Incident Happened	Who Performed Incident Against Them	Total Number of Cases
Being Laughed At Or Teased	28%	36%	School 68%	Classmates 46%	81
Being in a Physical Fight	18%	79%	Local Area 31%	Friends 10% & People They Know 10%	52
Having Property Stolen	12%	97%	School 36%	Don't Know 59%	34
Being Threatened with a Weapon	7%	80%	Other 35%	Strangers 45%	20

*Please note that the number of cases on which the cell entries are based varies slightly due to missing values.

⁷ A threshold of 20 cases was used to identify the top incident types which young people claimed bothered them the most. In some cases, the incident was reported by only 5 people, which was deemed an insignificant number of cases. An incident was not included in the analysis of most bothersome events, unless it was reported by at least 20 individuals.

6.6.2 Where, Who and Why? Everyday Events?

When dealing with where these incidents occurred, and who instigated them, the results were fairly predictable. Young people spend the majority of their time at school, with other young people, so it is expected that they will suffer some victimisation at that location, especially when one takes into account the types of victimisation incidents captured in this study. Since fighting at school often leads to disciplinary action, it seems plausible that fights would be more likely to take place in the local area (where no such disciplinary action ensues) instead of at school. It is unfortunate that most of the young people who claimed that they were threatened by a weapon specified an undetermined location (other), as this could further hinder efforts to minimize these types of crimes.

In terms of why young people chose not to tell someone about the various victimisation incidents that bothered them the most, by far the most frequent response was “I did not consider it to be serious enough to mention.” The same four types of victimisation incidents that were discussed earlier (retaining the 20 case threshold) were examined to determine how many young people thought insufficient seriousness was a salient reason for not telling someone about what happened to them as their ‘most bothersome’ victimisation. Sixty-four percent of those reporting being laughed at and 18% of those who had property stolen did not report the incident by dint of judged triviality of the event. The judgment of non-report by dint of lack of seriousness varied widely by event type to a degree that was statistically reliable (Chi-square = 50.39, 10df, $p < .001$).

When young people were asked whether or not they reported the incident that bothered them the most to the Gardaí, there was no instance meeting the twenty case threshold where ‘yes’ was the majority response. The event having the highest rate of report was

being threatened by weapons and surrounded, where 20% would report the incident to the Gardaí.

6.6.3 How Victimisation Affects You

Returning to the overall victimisation experiences of the sample rather than the single most bothersome event, the possible effects of victimisation on young people's social lives, relationships, self-judged school performance, and self-confidence were investigated with gender in mind. Self-confidence was the only one of these factors that was significantly affected by gender. Of the 147 female responses as to whether or not victimisation had an effect on their self-confidence, the responses were 'harmed a lot' in 18% of cases, 'did not affect' in 39% of cases, and 'improved a lot' in 7% of cases. Males responded in a similar fashion. Of the 171 male responses regarding the effect of victimisation on their self-confidence, the responses were 'harmed a lot' in 6% of cases, 'did not affect' in 38% of cases, and 'improved a lot' in 11% of cases. The gender difference here was statistically significant (Chi-square = 15.23, df = 5, $p < .01$).

6.6.4 Why Young People Think Victimisation Happens

Several areas were covered in an attempt to establish what young people thought were contributing factors to their victimisation. The options among which they were invited to choose related to where they live, their appearance, their personality and intelligence, and their sexual orientation. The original question asked how often the various options given were the reason that the young person was victimised. Splitting the responses in this manner resulted in minimising responses. As a result, the responses were re-coded in order to determine whether or not the various reasons were factors in individual victimisations.

The lowest reported reasons for victimisation were being gay (5%), wearing glasses (8%), and race (10%). Unfortunately, the proportion of the sample that were homosexual is unknown so the determination of relevance of this finding is precluded by this fact. The highest reported reasons for victimisation were physical appearance (41%), being different (36%), and being more intelligent (33%). Interestingly, only 16% of the sample reported being less intelligent as the reason for their victimisation. The other reported reasons for victimisation included having a particular hair colour (18%), being shy (26%), and being athletic/strong/sporty (16%).

Finally, the only two factors in which genders differed as putative reasons for being victimised were physical appearance (Chi-square = 6.60, df = 2, $p < .05$) and wearing glasses (Chi-square = 7.31, 2df, $p < .05$). Thirty-three per cent of the sample reported where they lived as a reason for victimisation, but gender did not appear to affect this (Chi-square = 1.73, 2df, $p > .05$).

6.6.5 Attitudes toward the Gardaí

In order to get an idea of how young people felt about the Gardaí, questions were asked in regards to whether Gardaí do a good job, whether Gardaí can be trusted, and finally, whether Gardaí treat adults more fairly than young people. In all cases, young people reported negative attitudes toward the Gardaí more often than positive attitudes, with only approximately 10% of the sample reporting strong positive attitudes towards the Gardaí. In summary, 44% of the sample reported feeling that the Gardaí do not do a good job and 48% reported feeling that the Gardaí cannot be trusted. Finally, 64% of the sample felt that the Gardaí treated adults more fairly than young people.

Table 15: Attitudes towards the Gardai

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Do A Good Job		
Strongly Agree	44	10.7%
Agree	89	21.6%
Do Not Agree or Disagree	99	24.0%
Disagree	86	20.9%
Strongly Disagree	94	22.8%
Can Be Trusted		
Strongly Agree	42	10.4%
Agree	74	18.4%
Do Not Agree or Disagree	94	23.3%
Disagree	97	24.1%
Strongly Disagree	96	23.8%
Treat Adults More Fairly		
Strongly Agree	164	40.1%
Agree	98	24.0%
Do Not Agree or Disagree	76	18.6%
Disagree	43	10.5%
Strongly Disagree	28	6.8%

6.6.6 Curfews and Free Time

Young people were asked when they were usually expected home (no matter what they planned on doing) both during the school week and at weekends. They were asked this in an effort to determine whether staying out late at night had an effect on rates of victimization and offending. The following table provides a breakdown of young people's curfews during the school week and at the weekend.

Table 16: Week & Weekend Curfews

Variable	Amongst All Young People	Amongst Males	Amongst Females
School Week			
Before 10pm	46%	51%	42%
After 10pm	54%	49%	58%
Weekend			
Before 10pm	15%	13%	17%
After 10pm	85%	87%	83%

The sample was asked to detail their curfew both during the week and at the weekend. As can be seen in Table 16, the majority of young people were allowed to stay out after 10pm both during the school week and at the weekend. The scale stipulated either After School & After Activities or Before 7pm-11pm, and finally, Midnight or later. Almost 70% of the sample reported having to be home before 8pm during the week, while only 15% of the sample reported having a curfew after 8pm on weekends. Only 8% of the sample had curfews after midnight during the week, which was a higher percentage than at the weekend (1.5%). This is likely due to the fact that 60% of the sample reported curfews 'After Activities' on weekends, indicating an expected leniency on the weekends that is not given during the week.

There were significant relationships found between both school week and weekend curfews, and all types of offending, with a particularly strong relationship found between school week curfew and total offending ($X^2=31.088$, $df=1$, $P<.001$). Interestingly, minor victimization was significantly related to the weekday curfew ($X^2=24.616$, $df=1$, $P<.001$) but other forms of victimization were not. A similarly significant relationship was found between the weekend curfews and offending.

However, in the case of the weekend curfew, no significant relationship was found with violent offending and the strongest relationship was with minor offending ($X^2=20.629$, $df=1$, $P<.001$).

In terms of what young people do with their free time, Table 17 below details how much time young people usually spend ‘Spending time with your family’, ‘Organised activities after school’ (sports, youth clubs, etc.), and ‘Hanging out with friends at weekends’. A high proportion of the sample reported spending time with their families (approximately 75%). Almost 25% of the sample spent ‘A lot’ of time in organised activities. However, a large proportion of the sample (37%) reported spending ‘No time’ in organised activities. This leaves a large amount of the sample with a surplus of potentially unsupervised free time. Unsurprisingly, almost 70% of the sample reported hanging out with friends at weekends ‘A lot’, while 24% spend at least ‘Some’ time with friends on weekends. Overall, there were low levels of young people reporting ‘None’ to spending time with Family (3.4%), and hanging out with friends at weekends (1%).

Table 17: Free Time

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Family Time		
A lot	148	35.6%
Some	167	40.1%
A little	87	20.9%
Organised Activities		
A lot	99	23.9%
Some	87	21.0%
A little	75	18.1%

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Weekend Hanging Out	283	68.2%
A lot	99	23.9%
Some	29	7.0%
A Little		

6.7 Gender Differences

The following sections will investigate gender differences in three ways. First, differences between the number of victimisation incidents that boys and girls experience will be considered. Then, offending differences between the genders will be explored. Finally, differences in drug use and negative personal safety attitudes (feeling unsafe) will be uncovered.

6.7.1 Gender Differences for Victimisation

Gender is an important factor to consider when determining the levels and types of victimisation experienced by young people. Table 18 details group differences between gender for Minor Victimisation experiences, Property Victimisation experiences, and Violent Victimisation experiences. Though the differences between genders are statistically significant in all cases, it is important to note the effect size (the magnitude of the differences). The formula for determining effect size is: $\text{Eta Squared} = t^2 / t^2 + (N_1 + N_2 - 2)$. Cohen (1992) has stated that .01 is indicative of a small effect size, .06 is indicative of a medium effect size, and .14 indicates a large effect size. The effect size is small in all of the cases, except violent victimisation experiences, which is approaching a medium effect size. Descriptions of independent samples t-tests undertaken for results are given after the table.

Table 18: Group differences between males and females for number of Victimization incidents

	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	η^2
Minor Victimization Experiences	Females	190	5.67	3.23	-2.55**	394	.02
	Males	206	6.58	3.88			
Property Victimization Experiences	Females	196	4.36	0.72	-2.19*	403	.01
	Males	209	4.56	1.03			
Violent Victimization Experiences	Females	196	6.47	2.31	-4.15***	403	.04
	Males	209	7.69	3.51			

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Independent sample t-tests were conducted in order to compare the minor, property, and violent victimisation scores between females and males. The first independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the minor victimisation experience scores between the sexes. There was a significant difference in scores between the two genders, $t(394) = -2.55$, $p < .01$, two-tailed with females ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 3.23$) scoring lower than males ($M = 6.58$, $SD = 3.88$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -0.91 , 95% CI: -1.62 to $-.21$) was small (eta squared = $.02$).

The next independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the property victimisation experience scores for females and males. There was a significant difference in scores between the two genders, $t(403) = -2.19$, $p < .05$, two-tailed with females ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.72$) scoring lower than males ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.03$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -0.19 , 95% CI: -0.37 to $-.02$) was small (eta squared = $.01$).

The final independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the violent victimisation experience scores for females and males. There was a significant difference in scores between the two genders, $t(403) = -4.15$, $p < .001$, two-tailed with females ($M = 6.47$, $SD = 2.31$) scoring lower than males ($M = 7.69$, $SD = 3.51$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.22 , 95% CI: -1.80 to $-.64$) was approaching medium (eta squared = $.04$).

6.7.2 Gender Differences for Offending

Table 19 details group differences between gender for Vandalism Offending Behaviour, Theft Offending Behaviour, and Violent Offending Behaviour. As before, the differences between genders were statistically significant in all cases and the effect sizes were quite small. Descriptions of independent samples t-tests undertaken for results are given after the table.

Table 19: Group differences between males and females for number of Offending incidents

	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	η^2
Vandalism Offending Behaviour	Females	197	2.72	1.14	-3.07**	408	.02
	Males	213	3.15	1.72			
Theft Offending Behaviour	Females	201	3.05	0.40	-3.73***	413	.02
	Males	214	3.48	1.64			
Violent Offending Behaviour	Females	193	4.10	1.73	-3.12**	405	.02
	Males	214	4.72	2.24			

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Independent sample t-tests were conducted in order to compare the Vandalism Offending Behaviour, Theft Offending Behaviour, and Violent Offending Behaviour

scores for females and males. The first independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the vandalism offending behaviour scores for females and males. There was a significant difference in scores between the two genders, $t(408) = -3.07$, $p < .01$, two-tailed with females ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.14$) scoring lower than males ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.72$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -0.44 , 95% CI: -0.72 to $-.16$) was small (eta squared = $.02$).

The next independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the theft offending behaviour scores for females and males. There was a significant difference in scores between the two genders, $t(413) = -3.73$, $p < .001$, two-tailed with females ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.40$) scoring lower than males ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.64$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -0.43 , 95% CI: -0.66 to $-.20$) was small (eta squared = $.02$).

The final independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the violent offending behaviour scores for females and males. There was a significant difference in score between the two genders, $t(405) = -3.12$, $p < .01$, two-tailed with females ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.73$) scoring lower than males ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 2.24$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -0.62 , 95% CI: -1.00 to $-.23$) was small (eta squared = $.02$).

6.7.3 Gender Differences for Drug Use and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes

The next table displays the differences between males and females for drug use and negative personal safety attitudes. Independent sample t-tests were conducted in order to compare these factors by gender. The first independent samples t-test was conducted to compare drug use scores for females and males. There was a significant difference

in scores between the two genders, $t(392) = 2.13$, $p < .05$, two-tailed with females ($M = 7.20$, $SD = 2.79$) scoring higher than males ($M = 6.64$, $SD = 2.51$). Though this was the first instance of females scoring higher than males, the magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 0.56, 95% CI: 0.44 to 1.08) was small (eta squared = .01).

The second independent samples t-test was conducted to compare negative personal safety attitude scores for females and males. There was a significant difference in scores between the two genders, $t(393) = 1.88$, $p < .05$, two-tailed with females ($M = 6.72$, $SD = 2.40$) scoring lower than males ($M = 6.26$, $SD = 2.44$). As before, the magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 0.46, 95% CI: -0.02 to .94) was small (eta squared = .01). Differences in scores on drug use and negative personal safety attitudes are detailed in the following table:

Table 20: Group differences between males and females for Drug Use and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes

	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	η^2
Drug Use	Females	196	7.20	2.79	2.13*	392	.01
	Males	209	6.64	2.51			
Negative Personal Safety Attitudes	Females	192	6.72	2.40	1.88*	393	.01
	Males	203	6.26	2.44			

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Negative Personal Safety Attitudes is only approaching significance at .06.

6.8 Sibling Living Arrangement Differences

Independent samples t-tests were performed in order to compare individuals who live with a brother and those who do not live with a brother in terms of a range of variables including the three victimisation scores, offending, parental supervision, drug use, NPSA, and attitudes towards Gardaí. Three statistically significant differences were identified. Statistically significant differences were revealed for minor victimisation, between the two groups, $t(89.83) = -2.67$, $p < .01$, two-tailed with individuals not living with their brothers ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 3.50$) scoring lower than individuals living with their brothers ($M = 7.34$, $SD = 4.06$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.48 , 95% CI: -2.59 to $-.38$) was small (eta squared = $.02$).

Young people who do not live with a brother experience higher levels of minor victimisation. There is a difference in terms of drug use as well indicating that if a young person lives with a brother, they have a slightly higher level of drug use. Having more negative personal safety attitudes coincides with not living with a brother, while those who live with a brother experience fewer negative personal safety attitudes. The difference is statistically significant. Considering all the t-values in the below table, the differences reported are all relatively small but still merit reporting.

Table 21: Differences between living with/not living with brother and Minor Victimization, Drug Use and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes

	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	η^2
Minor Victimization	Living w/ Brother	238	5.86	3.50	-2.67**	89.83	.02
	Not w/Brother	64	7.34	4.06			
Drug Use	Living w/ Brother	241	7.07	2.78	1.98*	125.5	.01
	Not w/Brother	64	6.44	2.14			
Negative Personal Safety Attitudes	Living w/ Brother	234	6.35	2.40	-2.13*	295	.01
	Not w/Brother	63	7.10	2.63			

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

No differences were discovered anywhere when the data was analysed in terms of whether or not individuals lived with a sister, which is interesting considering that the analysis of data in terms of whether an individual lived with a brother identified numerous significant differences.

6.9 Victimization and Offending Differences for Parental Differences and Employment Status of Guardians

The data was first analysed in terms of parental differences (whether a young person was living with their mother/father) and all types of victimisation and offending. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the victimisation experience and offending behaviour scores for young people living with their mothers/fathers and young people not living with their mothers/fathers. In the vast majority of cases, there was not a significant difference between groups. The findings revealed that there were no statistically significant differences anywhere on all variables in terms of whether or not a young person lived with their father. However, violent offending was

approaching significance at .07. On the other hand, there was one significant difference between young people who lived with their mothers and those who did not live with them, in terms of minor victimisation experiences.

There was a significant difference in score between the two groups, $t(377) = -3.44$, $p < .01$, two-tailed with those not living with their mothers ($M = 9.00$, $SD = 4.32$) being more likely to become victims of minor victimisation incidents than those living with their mothers ($M = 5.98$, $SD = 3.49$). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = -3.02, 95% CI: -4.74 to -1.29) was small (eta squared = .03). This increased likelihood can be stated with a fair degree of reliability.

Table 22: Differences between living with Mother/Father or not and Minor Victimization and Violent Offending

	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	η^2
Minor Victimization	With Mother	362	5.98	3.49	-3.44**	377	.03
	Not W/Mother	17	9.00	4.32			
Violent Offending	With Father	277	4.35	1.95	-1.78*	343	.01
	Not W/Father	68	4.84	2.34			

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Violent Offending is only approaching significance at .07.

The data was also analysed in terms of the employment status of guardians and victimisation and offending. A one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore whether the number of adults in employment (living with the young people) had an effect on victimisation experiences and offending behaviour. The sample was divided into three groups according to the employment status of adults living in the home (two or more adults, one adult, and no adult). There was a

statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in theft offending behaviour scores for the three groups $F(2, 404) = 3.84, p < .05$. The actual difference in mean scores between groups was quite small, despite statistical significance being reached. Using eta squared, the effect size was calculated as .02. The Tukey HSD test allowed for post-hoc comparisons and indicated that the mean score for one or more adults working ($M = 3.14, SD = 0.61$) was significantly different from no adults working ($M = 3.73, SD = 2.10$). There was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between two or more adults working ($M = 3.30, SD = 1.37$) and one or more adults working or no adults working. In other words, the only significant difference in this instance was between having someone in the household working versus no one in the house working, since having two or more adults working was insignificant.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the experiences of young people in terms of their reported victimisation and offending. The chapter provided an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample, including gender, age, ethnic origin, living situation, adults working in the home, and area information. The findings were discussed in terms of categories of victimisation (minor, property, violent) and offending (vandalism, theft, violent). Frequencies and prevalence were then explored, along with family victimisation and crime in the neighbourhood. The last sections dealt with how young people felt about their experiences and the Gardaí, what types of curfews were enforced in their homes, and how free time was usually spent by the sample.

Now that experiences of young people have been investigated in great detail, the next chapter will provide a theoretical introduction to factor analysis and structural equation modelling. This chapter will provide the theoretical background knowledge that will be necessary to understand the sophisticated data analysis that will take place in Chapter 8.

Chapter 7:

Theoretical Introduction to Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a theoretical introduction to factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) will be provided. The chapter will lay out what factor analysis is, discussing confirmatory factor analysis in detail. The chapter will then move on to providing a detailed description of structural equation modelling and the five steps commonly used when undertaking SEM. How each of these methods were used in this research will also be detailed throughout the chapter.

7.2 What is Path Analysis & Factor Analysis?

Structural equation models involve the evaluation of two distinct types of analysis: path analysis and factor analysis. Path analysis involves using a path diagram to represent the relationship between variables and is linked to multiple regression, through the involvement of simultaneous estimations of multiple regression models. Path analysis allows for a direct and very effective method of modelling complex relationships among variables, including indirect effects, which can be difficult to measure using other methods. In basic terms, path analysis can be described as causal modelling, due to the fact that it is made up of modelled structural relations among latent and observed variables, which are based on the researcher's hypotheses about how the various independent variables might affect the dependent variables (Lei & Wu, 2007). On the other hand, path analysis can also be referred to as covariance structure analysis. This is due to the importance of the analysis of interrelationships and associations among

variables in structural equation models, which researchers hypothesise in order to create particular correlations among the variables (Lei & Wu, 2007). Within SEM, variables can play a number of roles. Variables can act as exogenous (independent) variables, which are source variables, endogenous (dependent) variables which are result variables, or mediator variables, which act as both source and result variables (Fox, 2006; Lei & Wu, 2007). During the course of path analysis, observed variables are considered as if they were measured without error, which can be problematic, as this poses a probable false reality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This is where factor analysis comes into play.

Through the use of a factor analysis-based measurement model, variances of the observed variables can be separated from error variances, correcting unreliability in the model. A proportion of distinctive measurement error is assumed to be contained within every directly observed measurement in factor analysis procedures. Using factor analysis, researchers are able to determine what is distinctive to each factor under consideration and what is shared amongst them, through the use of a few factors that are directly observed (Suen, Lei, & Li, 2011). In factor analysis, the emphasis is on how the latent factors relate to the observed variables. In basic terms, factor analysis is a statistical approach to the identification of a limited number of unobservable factors that are used to signify relationships among various sets of interconnected observable variables. For example, Drug Use by Youth is a broad construct that can have a number of factors, for example, solitary drug use, drug use with friends, and drug use while drinking. The central purpose of factor analysis is the identification of the structure which exists amongst the variables being analysed.

There are two main types of factor analysis: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Byrne, 2009). The most salient difference between EFA and CFA involves the differing ways in which communalities are used. Field (2005) explains that in CFA the assumption that communalities are one in the first instance means that there is no error variance due to the fact that the complete amount of variance amongst the variables can be determined by its factors. Conversely, EFA involves assumed error variance and an estimation of communalities. Exploratory factor analysis is primarily concerned with the identification of a structure amongst variables and is often used as a method to reduce data. Hair et al. (2006) summarise EFA quite well:

EFA *explores* the data and provides the researcher with information about how many factors are needed to best represent the data. With EFA, all measured variables are related to *every* factor by a factor loading estimate. Simple structure results when each measured variable loads highly on only one factor and has smaller loadings on other factors (i.e., loadings < .4) (p. 773).

There are no constraints placed on the data when EFA is employed, unlike CFA, which often involves *a priori* constraints. In other words, CFA is based on preconceived notions regarding the data structure, which is based on theory, previous research, or often both, while EFA is based solely on statistically-derived factors. EFA will not be discussed further, as it was not used in this project, but the following paragraphs will discuss CFA in further detail.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed in this research to allow for the testing of models/representations of the factor structure of a scale, which was proposed in advance. CFA is a powerful statistical technique that determines if a self-report measure is doing what it is meant to do. The purpose behind determining the factor structure of a model is to use this understanding to predict outcomes or to understand

how they arise in the first place. Ultimately, determining factor structure allows for the definitive determination of whether the factors making up a scale measure what they are meant to measure.

CFA was also chosen as an appropriate statistical methodology for this research because it allows for the testing of construct validity. Construct validity is one of the most important things to investigate when determining the reliability and validity of a scale, because it shows empirically that the factors are measuring what they are meant to be measuring (Brown, 2006). Construct validity deals with measurement accuracy in that it determines “the extent to which a set of measured items actually reflects the theoretical latent construct those items are designed to measure” and once construct validity is established there is confidence that “item measures taken from a sample represent the actual true score that exists in the population” (Hair, et al., 2006, p. 776). Composite reliability was also established. The consistency amongst responses confirmed that there was consistent reliability in the patterns established through the various responses. This was further indication that the scale was doing what it was meant to do.

In conclusion, a scale was developed to investigate three different types of victimisation experiences that were related but distinct. CFA was then used to investigate if in fact the scale was doing what it was intended to do within this sample. The results of CFA indicated that it supported the chosen design.

7.3 What is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)?

In basic terms, structural equation modelling (SEM) is model testing that is guided by theory and used to explain, further explore, and/or understand various outcomes. As Byrne (2012) points out, SEM can be best explained by looking at the focal points of its procedure:

(a) that the causal processes under study are represented by a series of structural (i.e., regression) equations, and (b) that these structural relations can be modelled pictorially to enable a clearer conceptualization of the theory under study. The hypothesized model can then be tested statistically in a simultaneous analysis of the entire system of variables to determine the extent to which it is consistent with the data. If goodness-of-fit is adequate, the model argues for the plausibility of postulated relations among variables; if it is inadequate the tenability of such relations is rejected (p. 3).

Various statistical models are used in reporting statistical analysis results including: Analysis of variance (ANOVA), factor analysis, and multiple regression. However, the use of SEM has become increasingly popular amongst criminological researchers, with SEM used to further investigate crime in terms of disadvantaged areas, risk, and cooperation with police, to name a few (Kim, Pratt, & Wallace, 2013; Kooi, & Patchin, 2008; Van Damme, Pauwels, & Svensson, 2013).

From the literature, we know that many factors affect victimisation and offending risk. In this study, SEM was used as part of a cross-sectional design (using data collected at one point in time) so direct causality could not be determined. The issue of causality will not be investigated further in this thesis, as the methodological design precluded any discussion on causality, as causality assumes temporal order (cause and effect which assumes a time differential). The cross-sectional design of this research did not allow for temporal order, thus making determining causality impossible. However, the model design was both guided by theory and developed in advance, so that all the

variables selected for inclusion in the various models had a relationship with victimisation that was specified in a clear fashion. SEM allows for the incorporation of these variables as latent constructs which allows for appropriate measurement.

The CFA component of SEM allows for the creation of latent variables instead of observed variables so that the variables can be measured precisely. The structural component of SEM shows how all of the variables are related to each other. The first way that SEM was used in this research was to construct the measurement components of the models, in order to make sure all of the variables were being measured accurately. Once accurate measurement of the latent variables is established, SEM is used to establish the relationships between the latent variables and the relationship from the observed variables onto the latent variables.

Performing CFA and establishing the validity of the victimisation and offending scales revealed how many latent variables were there so that they could be incorporated into a structural model. Once the variables that need to be investigated further are identified – the association/relationship between them must be established. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) allows for the same types of associations/relationships to be established, except only observed scores are being considered in MRA. SEM is superior to MRA because it allows for CFA and MRA to be performed simultaneously, and it not only measures the variables of interest (in as accurate measure as possible), but also, the association between the variables, for example, how one variable predicts another variable. Accurate measurement is of utmost importance since the more error contained within each of the two variables being measured when attempting to estimate a relationship between the two, the smaller the relationship will be. A more accurate

measure of each variable leads to less measurement error, which in turn leads to a greater possibility in determining a true relationship between two variables.

7.4 Five Step Process for Structural Equation Modelling

There are five main steps involved in structural equation modelling. They include: Model Specification, Model Identification, Model Estimation, Model Testing, and Model Modification. In the following section, each of these steps will be explained in order to facilitate ease of understanding of the use of SEM in this research. Three popular software packages used in factor analysis and SEM (during the second and third steps in particular) are LISREL, Mplus, and Amos. Mplus was chosen as the best package to use during this research project. Mplus differs from the other two packages primarily in its inability to estimate models through drawing simple path diagrams and its ability to estimate a wider range of models.

7.4.1 Model Specification

The first step in the five step SEM process is Model Specification, where the theoretical model is developed and defined by both fixed and free parameters. Schumaker and Lomax highlight the importance of model specification to SEM modelling through pointing out that “path analysis does not provide a way to specify the model, but rather estimates the effects among the variables once the model has been specified a priori by the researcher on the basis of theoretical considerations” (2010, p. 147). Model Specification can either occur in the form of verbal explanation, drawing of path diagrams, or a series of equations. Diagrams were used to specify the various models in this piece of research, because they are easier to understand. Furthermore, various computer programmes are often used to estimate relationships between variables at a

later stage, making complicated equations redundant. Attention is also drawn to variables that have been excluded and links that have been missed when a path diagram is used, which in turn, may also increase the probability of an improved model conceptualization (Diamantopoulos, 1994). An enhanced understanding of structural models can be obtained through the use of path diagrams, which also aid in the construction of appropriate input files and decreased error in specification (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000).

Hair et al. 2006 have highlighted the importance of both previous empirical results and theory to this stage of the process. Generally speaking, fixed parameters are established at zero, which indicates that a relationship between the variables does not exist, while free parameters are estimates from the observed data. It is up to the researcher to designate the various parameters as either fixed or free, when determining where relationships are expected during the SEM process. In other words, the parameters at play in the observable sample variance and the covariance matrix have to be determined. This determination is often made when a researcher makes their *a priori hypothesis*. The parameters are used later in the SEM process to determine the way in which comparisons between the components of the model (diagram, covariance matrix, variance of sample population) will be carried out.

7.4.2 Model Identification and Model Estimation

After model specification, the identification of the model and its various parameters takes place. A model is considered identified when it becomes impossible for clear-cut sets of parameter estimates to recreate matching population variance-covariance matrices. Models can be considered identified, under-identified, just identified, and over-identified (Kelloway, 1998; Hair, et al., 2006). Identified models contain unique

observed variances and covariances, which are obtained through determining parameter estimates. Just identified models contain exactly the same number of ways to determine parameter estimates as the number of parameter estimates themselves. These types of models have zero degrees of freedom. On the other hand, when it is impossible to estimate all parameters within the model, a model is considered under-identified. Finally, when there are more known than free parameters, a model is considered over identified, which leads to constraints on the correlation or covariation matrix.

Model estimation involves the estimation of various model parameters, which are determined through establishing numeric values for each model parameter (element). A properly specified model often contains a mixture of fixed and free parameters, of which the free parameters must be estimates obtained from the data (Lei & Wu, 2007). The process of estimation begins with the calculation of an appropriate correlation/covariance matrix of the observed variables, moves on to the assignment of trial values to parameters, and ends with the calculation of the correlation/covariance matrix that these values imply. The main statistical benefit to covariance matrix analysis is that both standard errors of the estimates and fit indices are correct. However, many survey responses involve ordinal and non-normal data, which when treated continuously, can result in a whole host of problems. Luckily, MPLUS and other software packages are capable of computing matrices by using variables of many scale types.

The estimation of free parameters involves a continuous attempt to minimize discrepancies between the observed covariance matrix (supplied from the data) and the inferred covariance matrix (supplied from the model). These discrepancies can lead to

a failure to estimate the model or the improper provision of solutions. Problems with estimating models usually occur due to models not being identified, variables being too highly correlated, and/or sample sizes being too small (Lei & Wu, 2007).

7.4.3 Testing Model Fit

Once the model has been specified and estimated, the fit of the model has to be assessed. In basic terms, a model is a hypothetical estimate of the phenomena being investigated. If the data and model are inconsistent, the model should be rejected. The primary statistics used to test model fit in this research were χ^2 , *df*, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR, and AIC. Each of these statistics will be discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

Generally, fit indices can be classified in two ways: 1) as absolute indices or 2) as incremental indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999). When assessing the similarity between the observed and fitted model matrices, absolute indices are being put into play. “Absolute indices evaluate the overall discrepancy between observed and implied covariance matrices; fit improves as more parameters are added to the model and degrees of freedom decrease”, while on the other hand, incremental indices are used to “assess absolute or parsimonious fit relative to a baseline model” (Hancock & Mueller, 2010, p. 490). In other words, incremental indices are used when assessing the superiority of the hypothesised model to an alternative model.

In terms of absolute fit indices, the chi-square (χ^2) statistic is commonly used to test whether a model fits the data. Before using this this statistic the null hypothesis must be established, which in this case is that the model fits the data (Lei & Wu, 2007). When using this statistic, the aim of the researcher is to fail to reject the null hypothesis. When assessing goodness of fit using χ^2 , a researcher is looking for small, non-significant values to demonstrate a good fit, as in this case, large, significant values

are indicators of poor fit. Bentler (2007) recommends the use of adjunct fit indices to support the χ^2 test such as CFI and RMSEA, while Hoyle & Panter (1995) advise researchers to always cite the chi-square value in research reports, despite the limitations to using it.

Browne and Cudeck describe the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), as a measure of “discrepancy per degree of freedom” in a model (1993). One of the strengths of this statistic is that it allows the calculation of both significance tests and confidence intervals, thanks to its known sampling distribution. Browne and Cudeck (1993) made several recommendations concerning good model fit cut-offs, including not being in favour of employing models with an RMSEA greater than 0.1. They stated that “a value of the RMSEA of about 0.05 or less would indicate a close fit of the model in relation to the degrees of freedom,” while “the value of about 0.08 or less for the RMSEA would indicate a reasonable error of approximation” (p. 144).

Information criterion indices are an alternative to those indices used to ascertain absolute fit of specific models. These indices are used to compare models and to rank models. When using these indices to compare and rank models, the best model is marked by the smallest value. Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) was used in this research and is one of several information criterion indices (Akaike, 1987). In determining overall model fit, researchers must determine to what extent the sample data supports the theoretical model. Various goodness-of-fit indices are used in the evaluation of the model, for example: comparative fit ratio (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and χ^2/df ratio (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

7.4.4 Model Modification

Many researchers end up with mis-specified models. According to Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000, modifications can be made through connecting the indicators to the latent variable from free to fixed or fixed to free. This results in either the permitting or limiting of the various correlations amongst either the measurement errors or latent variables. When model modification is necessary, the type of specification error is key to determining how to modify the model, as Hancock & Mueller, 2010 explain:

With regard to external specification errors – when irrelevant variables were included in the model or substantively important ones were left out – remediation can only occur by respecifying the model based on more relevant theory. On the other hand, internal specification errors – when unimportant paths among variables were included or when important paths were omitted – can potentially be diagnosed and remedied using Wald statistics and Lagrange multiplier statistics (p. 491).

Generally speaking, when measures of either component or overall fit indicate mis-specification, researchers generally have two options: reject the model or make minor modifications. If a strict confirmatory approach is chosen, the model is rejected, but this option is not common as many consider it too inflexible (Jöreskog, 1993). The more flexible approach to dealing with mis-specified models is employing minor modifications, which often involves either the addition of model parameters or omission of measurement paths.

When using the popular method of introducing additional model parameters, the Modification Index (MI) can be used in the determination of which parameters in particular could be used in the improvement of overall chi-square (Bechger, Verstralen & Verhelst, 2002) but researchers should keep in mind that the inclusion of supplementary parameters often results in having to perform post-hoc explanations as

to why additional parameters were not included in the first place (Ruxton & Beauchamp, 2008).

On the other hand, the omission of paths in the measurement element of the model usually involves either the reduction of latent variable indicators with low factor loadings or the creation of a composite score using multiple indicators of a latent variable. There are arguments supporting the idea that there is a loss of meaning for latent variables when indicators that represent important aspects of the variable are removed. However, Bollen and Lennox (1991) highlight the interchangeable nature of indicators of roughly equal reliabilities while pointing out that the composite indicators and latent variables are not equivalent to one another. An increasingly popular alternative to the above two options is testing a number of competing models and accepting the strongest and most appropriate model (Jöreskog, 1993). This model comparison approach was used in this piece of research and was based on the *a priori* development of a number of models. This approach was deemed most effective due to the other approaches being difficult in both practice and their ability to be replicated.

7.5 Advantages and Limitations of SEM

One of the main advantages of SEM over multiple regression analysis (MRA) and similar multivariate techniques is its ability to examine multiple relationships at one time. SEM stands out from other multivariate statistical techniques, because of its ability to analyse a series of structural equations simultaneously, unlike other techniques that only allow for the examination of one relationship at a time (Hair et al., 2006; Smith & Langfield-Smith, 2004). Dion (2008) points out that the simultaneous estimation of all model coefficients allows for the assessment of the strength and significance of a relationship in the context of the entire model. SEM also gives

researchers the ability to measure variables as latent constructs, therefore free of measurement error, which allows for the determination of the true relationship between variables. In SEM you can include multiple dependent variables, whereas in MRA you can only use one variable at a time. SEM allows you to determine how factors impact on variables at the same time and allows for the simultaneous estimate of both the direct effects and the indirect effects. In MRA you can only look at direct effects and are unable to look at indirect effects. SEM also allows you to falsify models and to specify the model to look at both types of effects. This results in error reduction and allows for a much more complex assessment of the relationships between variables.

One of the primary disadvantages of SEM is its reliance on the researcher. The researcher determines which variables to consider when determining the particular hypothesis of cause within a model. This has a direct effect on the ability of a SEM to mirror the patterns of covariance and variance patterns amongst a sample that might be found in nature, because it is up to the researcher to choose the variables and pathways to be included in the model in the first place. A further disadvantage to the use of SEM is that writing the syntax that Mplus requires is both time-consuming and difficult to learn. Finally, a widespread criticism of SEM is that it is unable to test causation. This is further complicated by the fact that many beginners to SEM interpret the directional arrows in the path diagrams as a test of directionality, which is completely incorrect (Hair et al., 2006), as correlations between variables in no way indicate causation (Hopkins & Pearl, 2003). Another disadvantage to SEM is the restrictions on its use due to sample size. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham highlight the importance of sample sizes in determining minimal levels for factor loadings. They state that when a sample of 100 is the reference point, factor loadings above .55 are significant, while factor loadings above .75 are required with a sample of only 50. Furthermore, they

highlight the fact that a factor loading of .30 would only likely be significant in a sample of 350 (2006).

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical introduction to factor analysis and structural equation modelling. The chapter explained factor analysis in general and confirmatory factor analysis in detail. A detailed description of structural equation modelling, which included the five steps commonly used when undertaking SEM, was also provided.

Chapter 8: Empirical Investigation of the Theoretical Models

8.1 Introduction

Structural Equation Modelling is basically made up of measurements and relationships. The first way that SEM was used in this research was to construct the measurement components of the model, in order to make sure all of the variables were being measured accurately. Once accurate measurement of the latent variables was established, SEM was used to establish the relationships between the latent variables and the relationship from the observed variables onto the latent variables. Using SEM allowed for a deeper understanding of the following outcomes: Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, and Violent Victimization, through the creation of a theoretical model to explain why this sample has experienced the various types of victimisation and offending experiences that they have. The use of SEM also led to the identification of four factors that are important in predicting the likelihood of becoming a victim: Parental Supervision, Criminal Friends, Drug Use, and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes.

During CFA and SEM, missing data was managed using listwise deletion. Listwise deletion is simply the exclusion of cases which feature any incomplete data on all variables during the analysis (Geiser, 2013). The Robust Maximum Likelihood estimator was also used as part of the process, accounting for the missing data in the latent modelling context, as the missing data was not found at random, since a listwise deletion was employed.

8.2 Analysis of CFA and SEM Procedures

8.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Procedures

There are basically two types of factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Byrne, 2009). Generally speaking, EFA is a data-driven approach to factor analysis, which determines patterns between items that go together without theoretical relevancy, while CFA is an empirically-driven approach that also allows for the falsification of models. Furthermore, in EFA, every single item is allowed to load onto every factor, whereas in CFA the researcher controls which items load onto particular factors. CFA allows for the advanced specification of a derived model that the researcher thinks might explain the relationship between the various indicators. In other words, CFA allows the researcher to explicitly state the patterns that they expect to find and what could explain them, through the use of various models. When these models are tested, if the data does not fit, then the model can be falsified, and if it does fit, at least one solution that seems to fit the data has been identified for further investigation.

Three theoretically plausible models were created for the factor structure of the new scale of youth victimisation experiences and the new scale of youth offending behaviour. These models were developed with a sound theoretical basis. It was envisioned that there would be three factors present and the a priori hypothesis was that a three factor structure would represent the best fit of the data. Alternative models were also created and all models were investigated thoroughly.

The factor models were investigated using Mplus, which was used to specify and estimate the models, through the use of robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimation.

Three popular software packages used in factor analysis and SEM are LISREL, Mplus, and Amos. Mplus was chosen as the best package to use during this research project, due to its ability to estimate a wider range of models. It should be noted that writing the syntax that Mplus requires is both time-consuming and difficult to learn.

Fit was evaluated by using a variety of goodness-of-fit statistics and by assessing the suitability of the parameters of the model. The evaluation of fit included the determination of the relative model fit (between models) and the overall model fit (of each model).

Once the CFA of both youth victimisation experiences and youth offending behaviour established that the components within the SEM were being measured accurately, and that items were restricted to load only onto a single factor, the procedures moved on to the structural level in order to determine how all the variables relate to each other, through the use of regressions.

8.2.2 Structural Equation Modelling Procedures

In order to determine the best fitting model the ratio of the chi-square value to the degrees of freedom (df) was examined, along with the CFI, TLI, SRMR, RMSEA, and AIC. The structural equation modelling procedure began with using the chi-square (χ^2) statistic to assess the covariance matrix and sample. This project used a sample of 421 young people. It is generally understood that for models using samples over 200, the chi-square value is almost guaranteed to be significant, which will indicate a poor fitting model, as only non-significant chi-square values indicate good model fit. Fortunately, there are ways to avoid unnecessary rejection of models due to the impact of sample sizes on chi-square values. The recommended approach is for researchers to

examine the ratio of the chi-square to the degrees of freedom (df), which will normalise the chi-square, and if the χ^2 -to-df ratio is less than 3:1 the model will exhibit good fit (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993; Hair et al., 2006).

The next step in the procedure involved measuring the degree in which the model provides a better fit in comparison to a standard base model using the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) (Bentler, 1990; Tucker & Lewis, 1973). In the case of these two indices, values greater than .90 are indicative of reasonable fit, while values greater than .95 are indicative of a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The final step in the procedure utilized the standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR), the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1974; Joreskog & Sorborn, 1981; Steiger, 1990). AIC is used in the evaluation of different models, using the smallest value to indicate the model with the best fit. The ideal value for SRMR and RMSEA is less than .05, however, adequate fit is suggested by values less than .08 (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Joreskog & Sorborn, 1993).

It is important to highlight the fact that that penalties associated with models being overly complex apply only to the CFI, RMSEA and the AIC. In conclusion, in concurrence with the aforementioned recommendations, the ratio of the chi-square value to the degrees of freedom (df) was examined, along with the CFI, TLI, SRMR, RMSEA, and AIC to determine the best fitting model, in all six cases.

8.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Youth Victimisation Experience Scale (YVES)

In order to test the aims of the current study in regards to youth victimisation experiences, three confirmatory factor models were investigated. Model A was a model consisting of one factor. In this model, all twelve items loaded on a single latent victimisation variable. Model B was a model consisting of two factors. This model featured a correlated two-factor model with non-violent victimisation (NVV) and violent victimisation (VV) representing the two latent factors. Seven items loaded onto the NVV factor and five items loaded onto the VV factor. Model C was a model consisting of three factors. This model provided an inter-correlated solution featuring three latent factors: minor victimisation experiences (three items), property victimisation experiences (four items), and violent victimisation experiences (five items).

The fit indices of the three models of the victimisation experience scale are displayed in Table 23. Based on these findings, Model A (the uni-dimensional structure) provided a poor approximation of the data and was rejected accordingly. Model B also did not produce satisfactory fit across all indices, and was also rejected. Model C emerged as the most accurate representation of the underlying latent structure of the Youth Victimisation Experience Scale (YVES). This model included an inter-correlated three-factor solution with minor victimisation experiences, property victimisation experiences, and violent victimisation experiences reflecting the three latent factors. Based upon all fit indices for the obtained data, Model C was determined to be an adequate approximation of the covariation matrix.

Table 23: CFA and Model Fit Indices for Three Alternative Models of Victimization

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC
<i>CFA Models</i>							
1 Factor	408.476*	54	.60	.51	.13	.11	8857.543
2 Factor	213.821*	53	.82	.78	.09	.12	8566.857
3 Factor	109.773*	51	.93	.91	.05	.06	8367.119

Note. N = 416; χ^2 = chi square goodness of fit statistic; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation; CI = Confidence Interval; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Square Root Mean Residual. * Indicates χ^2 are statistically significant (p < .001)

Parameter estimates have also been used to determine the adequacy of this model. The standardized and unstandardized factor loadings for each observed variable on its corresponding latent variables are reported in Table 24 and are accompanied by standard errors. According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998), standardized factor loadings of 0.60 and above are considered the ideal level necessary for the verification that an observed variable, which has been identified a priori, is being represented appropriately by a latent variable, which has been specified. However, Comrey and Lee (1992) have stipulated that levels approaching .45 explain a fair amount of variance. Generally speaking, 0.30 is deemed an acceptable level and greater than 0.60 is deemed an ideal level. As shown in Table 24, all twelve items displayed positive and statistically significant (p < .01) factor loadings on the three victimisation factors (minor, property and violent).

Table 24: Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for the Three Factors of the YVES

Item	<i>B</i>	B	SE
<i>Factor 1: Minor</i>			
Laughed At	.83**	1.0	.00
Teased	.81**	.89	.07
Called Names	.88**	1.1	.07
<i>Factor 2: Property</i>			
Bike Stolen	.43**	1.0	.00
Mobile Stolen	.44**	1.7	.34
Music Player Stolen	.45*	.79	.33
Property Damaged Purposely	.72**	4.7	1.5
<i>Factor 3: Violent</i>			
Threat to Hurt	.84**	1.0	.00
Threat with Weapon	.71**	.63	.09
Hit for No Reason	.61**	.60	.10
Physical Fight	.53**	.82	.10
Surrounded and Hurt	.65**	.60	.10

Note. All factor loadings are statistically significant * (p < .01), ** (p < .001).

8.3.1 Factor Correlations

Correlations between three factors of the YVES are presented in Table 25. Moderate correlations were observed between the Minor victimisation factor and both the Property victimisation, and Violent victimisation factors while a moderately-strong association was observed between the Property victimisation and Violent victimisation factors. This moderately-strong association could possibly be due to the fact that in respect of measurement, both Property victimisation and Violent victimisation are measuring the more serious incidents of the personal victimisation of youth. The incidents of Property victimisation reflect indirect and non-confrontational personal

harm, while the incidents of Violent victimisation reflect direct and confrontational personal harm. Minor victimisation is not as highly associated with Property and Violent Victimsation because incidents falling into this category are quite minor in nature (compared to the other types of victimisation), thus, their measurement has less in common with the other types of victimisation.

Table 25: Correlations for the Three-Factor Model of the YVES

Item	MV	PV	VV
Minor Victimization (MV)	1	--	--
Property Victimization (PV)	.40	1	--
Violent Victimization (VV)	.46	.77	1

Note. All Factor correlations are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

8.3.2 Composite Reliability

In the context of latent variable modelling, the use of Cronbach's alpha and other conventional measures of internal reliability have been criticised. This is largely due to the fact that there is a tendency towards estimation errors in determining scale reliability, when using the more traditional measures (Raykov, 1998). The current research examined the composite reliability of the measurement properties of the scale. This examination resulted in the provision of a more stringent assessment of the internal reliability of the YVES. The formula for calculating composite reliability can be found on the following page:

$$\rho_c = \frac{\left(\sum_{i=1}^m \lambda_i\right)^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^m \lambda_i\right)^2 + \left(\sum_{i=1}^m (\theta_i)\right)}$$

Within the formula, the reliability of the factor score is indicated by ρ_c , while λ_i stands for the standardized factor loading, and θ_i represents standardised error variance. Diamantopoulos & Siguaw have stated that in general terms values larger than .60 are acceptable (2000). The results show that the YVES exhibited satisfactory composite reliability for each factor (Minor, $\rho_c = .88$; Property, $\rho_c = .60$; Violent, $\rho_c = .80$).

8.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS)

In order to test the aims of the current study in regards to youth offending behaviour, three confirmatory factor models were investigated once again. As previously mentioned, in order to specify and estimate the various models, Mplus and robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimation were used. Items were restricted to load only onto a single factor by the specified confirmatory factor models, and again, item errors terms were uncorrelated.

Model D was a model consisting of one factor, in which all eight items loaded on a single latent offending variable. Model E was a correlated two-factor model with non-violent offending behaviour (NVOB) and violent offending behaviour (VOB) representing the two latent factors. Five items loaded onto the NVOB factor and three items loaded onto the VOB factor. Model F was an intercorrelated three-factor solution

with property offending behaviour (two items), theft offending behaviour (three items), and violent offending behaviour (three items) reflecting the three latent factors.

The fit indices of the three models of the offending behaviour scale are displayed in Table 26. Based on these findings, Model D and Model E were rejected as they did not produce satisfactory fit across all indices and represented a poor approximations of the data. Model F emerged as the most accurate representation of the underlying latent structure of the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS). This model featured a three-factor solution which was mutually correlated with property offending behaviour, theft offending behaviour, and violent offending behaviour reflecting the three latent factors. Based upon all fit indices for the obtained data, Model 3 represented an adequate approximation of the covariation matrix.

Table 26: CFA and Model Fit Indices for Three Alternative Models of Offending

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC
<i>CFA Models</i>							
1 Factor	191.652*	20	.44	.22	.14	.12	5935.831
2 Factor	77.167*	19	.81	.72	.09	.10	5797.263
3 Factor	36.666*	17	.94	.89	.05	.06	5686.838

Note. N = 416; χ^2 = chi square goodness of fit statistic; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation; CI = Confidence Interval; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Square Root Mean Residual. * Indicates χ^2 are statistically significant (p < .01)

The determination of the adequacy of this model using parameter estimates are described below. As specified previously, standardized factor loadings should be 0.60 and above in order to verify that an observed variable identified a priori is represented by a specified latent variable, when conducting CFA (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and

Black, 1998). Table 27 displays the standardized and unstandardized factor loadings for each observed variable on its respective latent variables. All eight items displayed positive and statistically significant ($p < .01$) factor loadings on the three offending behaviour factors (property, theft and violent).

Table 27: Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for the Three Factors of the YOBS

Item	β	B	SE
<i>Factor 1: Vandalism</i>			
Damaged Property	.46**	1.0	.00
Broke Windows	.85**	1.1	.27
<i>Factor 2: Theft</i>			
Stole Bike	.95**	1.0	.00
Broke-In & Stole	.71**	.47	.12
Stole A Car/Went Joyriding	.74**	.71	.13
<i>Factor 3: Violent</i>			
Threat to Hurt	.69**	1.0	.00
Threat with Weapon	.62**	.80	.13
Physical Fight	.69**	.52	.12

Note. All factor loadings are statistically significant ** ($p < .001$).

8.4.1 Factor Correlations

Correlations between three factors of the YOBS are presented in Table 28. Moderately-Strong correlations were observed between the Property offending factor and both the Theft offending factor, and Violent offending factors while a moderate association was observed between the Theft offending and Violent offending factors.

Table 28: Correlations for the Three-Factor Model of the YOBS

Item	PO	TO	VO
Property Offending (PO)	1	--	--
Theft Offending (TO)	.75	1	--
Violent Offending (VO)	.78	.46	1

Note. All Factor correlations are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

8.4.2 Composite Reliability

As mentioned previously, in the context of latent variable modelling, a tendency towards estimation errors in the determination of internal scale reliability has led to the criticism of the use of traditional measures such as Cronbach's alpha for this purpose (Raykov, 1998). The current research examined the composite reliability of the measurement properties of the scale, which resulted in the provision of a more stringent assessment of the internal reliability of the YOBS. Composite reliability was calculated using the formula:

$$\rho_c = \frac{\left(\sum_{i=1}^m \lambda_i\right)^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^m \lambda_i\right)^2 + \left(\sum_{i=1}^m (\theta_i)\right)}$$

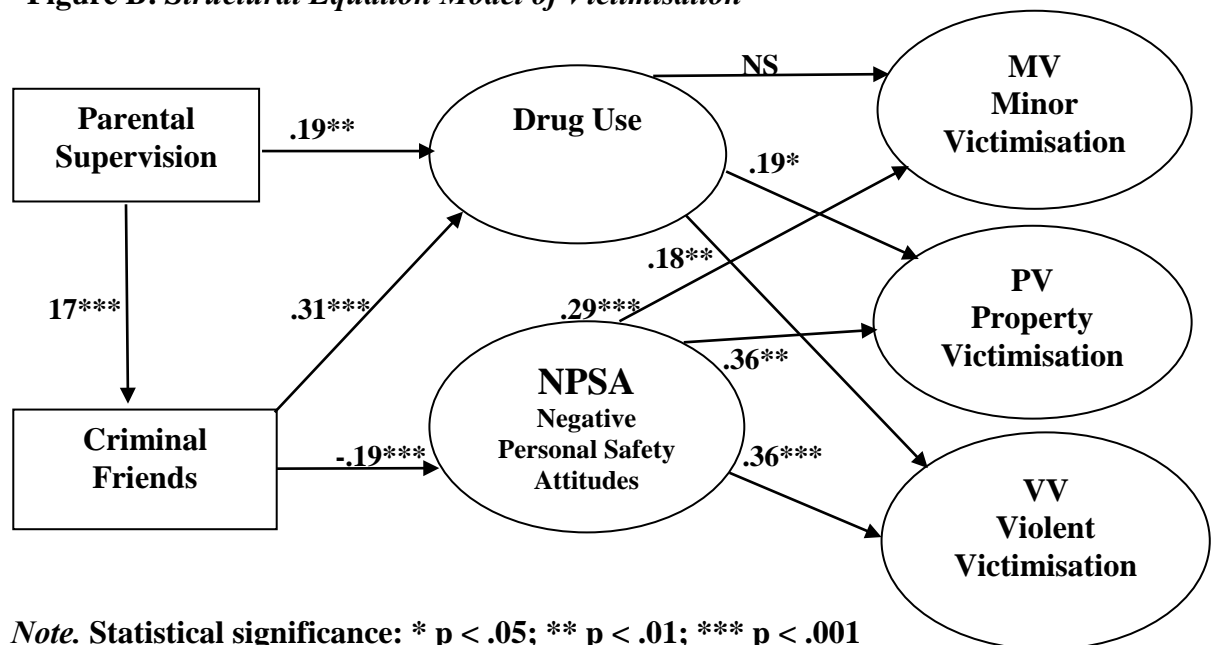
Within the formula, the reliability of the factor score is indicated by ρ_c , while λ_i stands for the standardized factor loading, and θ_i represents standardised error variance. The YOBS exhibited satisfactory composite reliability for each factor Property, $\rho_c = .75$; Theft, $\rho_c = .79$; Violent, $\rho_c = .71$).

8.5 Structural Equation Model of Victimisation

According to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) suggestions, assessing the proper factor structure of the measures used in the current study is required, prior to commencing testing of the structural model. Based upon the results presented in Section 8.3 regarding the factor structure of the YVES, three latent variables relating to minor, property, and violent victimisation experiences were included in the current model.

The following figure displays the path model for the SEM of Victimisation. In this figure, and all other path model representations, particular path model drawing practices are used in keeping with those practices which are typically employed in SEM. Observed variables are represented by boxes and latent variables are represented by circles, while arrows represent the relationships between variables and indicators. The arrows begin at the various latent variables and end at the indicators.

Figure B: Structural Equation Model of Victimisation



The current model of victimisation (Figure B) was developed and included a further two latent variables; Negative Personal Safety Attitudes (NPSA) measured by three

items and Drug Use Behaviour measured via five items. Factor loadings for measured variables on each victimisation factor can be seen in Table 24 in Section 8.3. Factor loading for each variable on the NPSA and Drug Use Behaviour factors were all statistically significant, positive, and in general were above a value of 0.4 (see Table 29 below for full details). Two observed variables were also included in the model: Criminal Friends and Parental Supervision.

Table 29: Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for Negative Personal Safety Attitudes (NPSA), and Drug Use Behaviour

Item	β	B	SE
NPSA by			
Do Not Feel Safe at School	.65	1.00	--
Do Not Feel Safe Walking Home from School	.89	1.60	.22
Do Not Feel Safe Walking in Area at Night	.48	1.14	.15
Drug Use Behaviour by			
Drink Alcohol of Any Kind	.39	1.00	--
Smoke Cigarettes	.49	3.09	.63
Smoke Pot	.92	4.20	.87
Take Ecstasy (MDMA)	.57	.45	.14
Do Harder Drugs such as Coke/Heroin	.58	.47	.15

Note. All Factor loadings are statistically significant ($p < .001$); $N = 409$.

The model of victimisation produced satisfactory model fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 379.174$, $df = 198$, $p < .0001$; $RMSEA = .05$ ($CI = .04-.05$); $SRMR = .06$; $CFI = .90$; $TLI = .88$) indicating that it is an adequate representation of the obtained data. The model explained 9.2% of variance in scores on Minor Victimization, which was found to be statistically significant ($p = .03$); 15% of variance in scores on Violent Victimization, which was also found to be statistically significant ($p = .02$); and 15.4% in Property Victimization, however this results did not reach the level of statistical significance ($p =$

.13). A probable explanation for the failure of Property Victimization to reach statistical significance (despite explaining a substantial amount of variance) is likely the high correlation that exists between this factor and Violent Victimization ($r = .78$).

The standardized and unstandardized regression weights for the current model of victimisation experiences are displayed in Table 30 on the following page. Both direct and indirect regression weights are included for the factors. As can be noted, levels of parental supervision had a weak, positive, statistically significant effect on criminal friends ($\beta = .17, p < .001$), and Drug Use Behaviour ($\beta = .19, p < .01$). Additionally, criminal friends displayed a statistically significant, positive, and moderate direct effect on Drug Use Behaviour ($\beta = .31, p < .001$), a weak, negative effect on NPSA ($\beta = -.19, p < .001$). Drug Use Behaviour was found to significantly predict Property Victimization ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) and Violent Victimization ($\beta = .18, p < .01$), but not Minor Victimization. NPSA were found to predict Minor Victimization ($\beta = .29, p < .001$) Property Victimization ($\beta = .36, p < .001$), and Violent Victimization ($\beta = .36, p < .01$).

One statistically significant indirect effect was observed within the model. Parental supervision was found to influence levels of Violent Victimization via Drug Use Behaviour ($\beta = .03, p < .05$).

Table 30: Standardized and unstandardized regression weights (with Standard Errors) for the YVES-based structural equation model of victimisation Experiences

Variables	<i>B</i>	B	SE
<i>Direct Influence</i>			
Parental Supervision (PS) ==> Drug Use Behaviour	.19**	.04	.01
Parental Supervision (PS) ==> Criminal Friends	.17***	.20	.06
Criminal Friends ==> NPSA	-.19***	-.07	.02
Criminal Friends ==> Drug Use	.31***	.05	.02
Drug Use ==> Minor Victimization (MV)	.10	.45	.32
Drug Use ==> Property Victimization (PV)	.19*	.08	.05
Drug Use ==> Violent Victimization (VV)	.18**	.52	.20
NPSA ==> Minor Victimization (MV)	.29***	.62	.14
NPSA ==> Property Victimization (PV)	.36**	.07	.03
NPSA ==> Violent Victimization (VV)	.36***	.48	.12
<i>Indirect Influence</i>			
PS ==> Criminal Friends ==> Drugs ==> MV	.01	.00	.00
PS ==> Drugs ==> MV	.02	.02	.01
PS ==> Criminal Friends==> Drugs ==> PV	.01	.00	.00
PS ==> Drugs ==> PV	.04	.00	.00
PS ==> Criminal Friends==> Drugs ==> VV	.01	.01	.00
PS ==> Drugs ==> VV	.03*	.02	.01
<i>R²</i> Minor Victimization $R^2 = .09$, SE = .04, $p < .05$; Property Victimization $R^2 = .15$, SE = .10, $p > .05$; Violent Victimization $R^2 = .15$, SE = .06, $p < .05$			
<i>Fit Indices</i> $\chi^2 = 379.174$, df = 198, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .047 (CI = .040 - .054); SRMR = .06; CFI = .90; TLI = .88)			

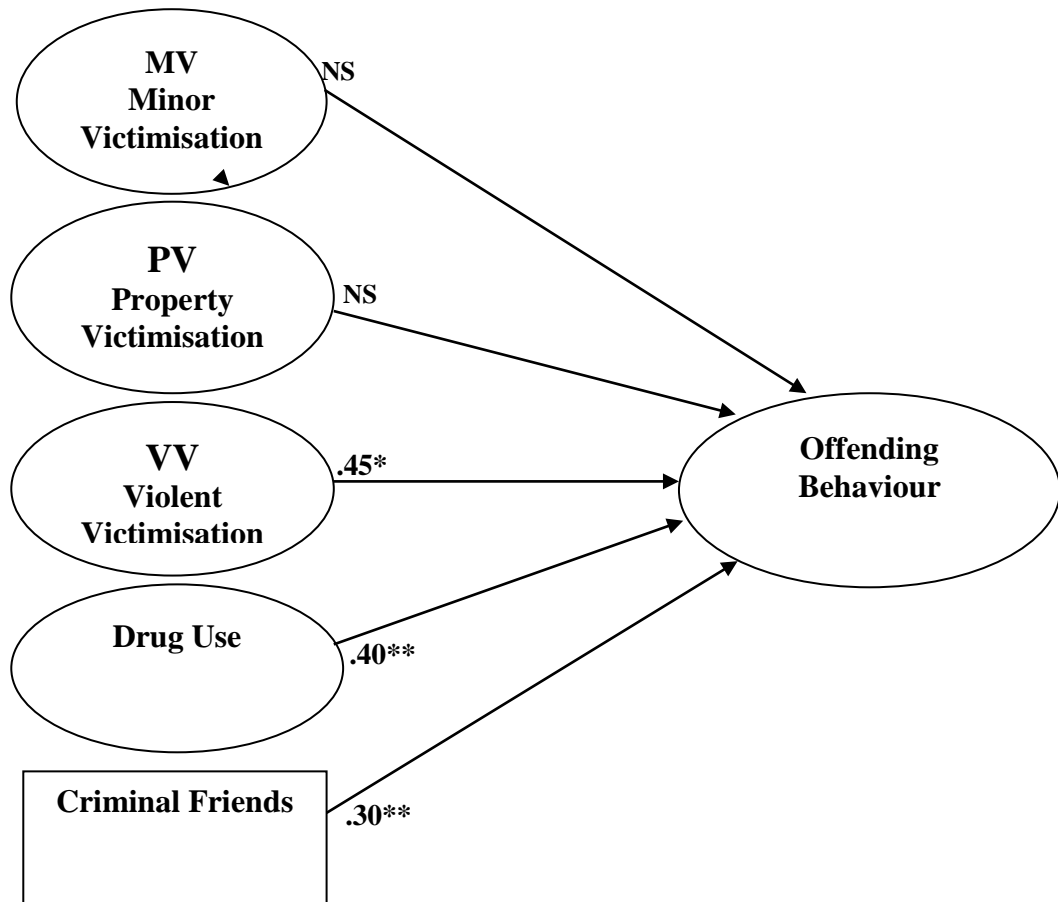
Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

8.6 Structural Equation Model of Offending

As with the Structural Equation Model of Victimization, the appropriate factor structure of the measures used in this study will be assessed prior to testing the structural model of offending as per Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) recommendations. For the current model, five latent variables were developed. Offending Behaviour was measured via (i) Theft offending behaviour, (ii) Vandalism offending behaviour, and (iii) Violent offending behaviour. Factor loadings for the three variables are presented in Table 31, along with factor loadings for each measured variable on the four remaining latent variables (Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, Violent Victimization, and Drug Use Behaviour). Factor loadings for each latent variable were all statistically significant, positive and of a robust level, as can be seen in Table 31 on the following page.

For the current analysis two distinct models of Offending Behaviour were developed (see Figure C and Figure D). Each model included four latent variables (MV, PV, VV, and Drug Use) and one observed variable (Criminal Friends). Model 1 is a direct model of Offending Behaviour in which Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, Violent Victimization, Drug Use Behaviour, and Criminal Friends directly impact Offending Behaviour. The arrows with numeric values are indicative of statistically significant relationships between variables and indicators, while the black arrows with the NS indicators indicate relationships that were tested but failed to produce evidence of statistically significant relationships.

Figure C: Model 1 - Direct Structural Equation Model of Offending



Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. NS indicates non-significance.

Table 31: Standardized and Unstandardized Factor Loadings (and Standard Errors) for Offending Behaviour, Victimization (Minor, Property, Violent) and Drug Use

Item	β	B	SE
Offending Behaviour			
Theft Offending	.71*	.52	.25
Vandalism Offending	.24***	1.00	.00
Violent Offending	.36***	.70	.27
Minor Victimization			
Laughed At	.81***	1.00	.00
Teased	.81***	.89	.08
Called Names	.88***	1.15	.09
Property Victimization			
Bike Stolen	.44***	1.00	.00
Mobile Stolen	.46***	1.80	.39
Music Player Stolen	.50**	.91	.41
Property Damaged Purposely	.70***	4.51	1.24
Violent Victimization			
Threat to Hurt	.86***	1.00	.00
Threat with Weapon	.66***	.54	.10
Hit for No Reason	.60***	.57	.10
Physical Fight	.52***	.76	.10
Surrounded and Hurt	.67***	.61	.10
Drug Use Behaviour			
Drink Alcohol of Any Kind	.38***	1.0	.00
Smoke Cigarettes	.50***	3.20	.72
Smoke Pot	.93***	4.33	.90
Take Ecstasy (MDMA)	.58***	.48	.16
Do Harder Drugs such as Coke/Heroin	.63***	.54	.17

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The direct model of Offending Behaviour produced satisfactory model fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 325.474$, $df = 175$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .05 (CI = .04-.06); SRMR = .07; CFI = .90; TLI = .86; AIC = 15056.264) indicating that it is an adequate representation of the obtained data. The model explained 39% of variance in Offending Behaviour, which was found to be statistically significant ($p = .02$). Table 32 displays the standardized and unstandardized regression weights for the current model of Offending Behaviour. As can be noted, Violent Victimization experiences had the strongest predictive effect on Offending Behaviour ($\beta = .45$, $p < .05$) followed by Drug Use Behaviour ($\beta = .40$, $p < .01$) and Criminal Friends ($\beta = .30$, $p < .01$).

Table 32: Standardized and unstandardized regression weights (with Standard Errors) for the direct model of Offending Behaviour

Variables	β	B	SE
Direct Influence			
Minor Victimization ==> Offending Behaviour	-.04	-.04	.09
Property Victimization ==> Offending Behaviour	-.32	-3.40	2.21
Violent Victimization ==> Offending Behaviour	.45*	.61	.29
Drug Use ==> Offending Behaviour	.40**	1.67	.70
Criminal Friends ==> Offending Behaviour	.30**	.20	.06

R^2

Offending Behaviour, $R^2 = .39$, SE = .16, P = .02

Fit Indices

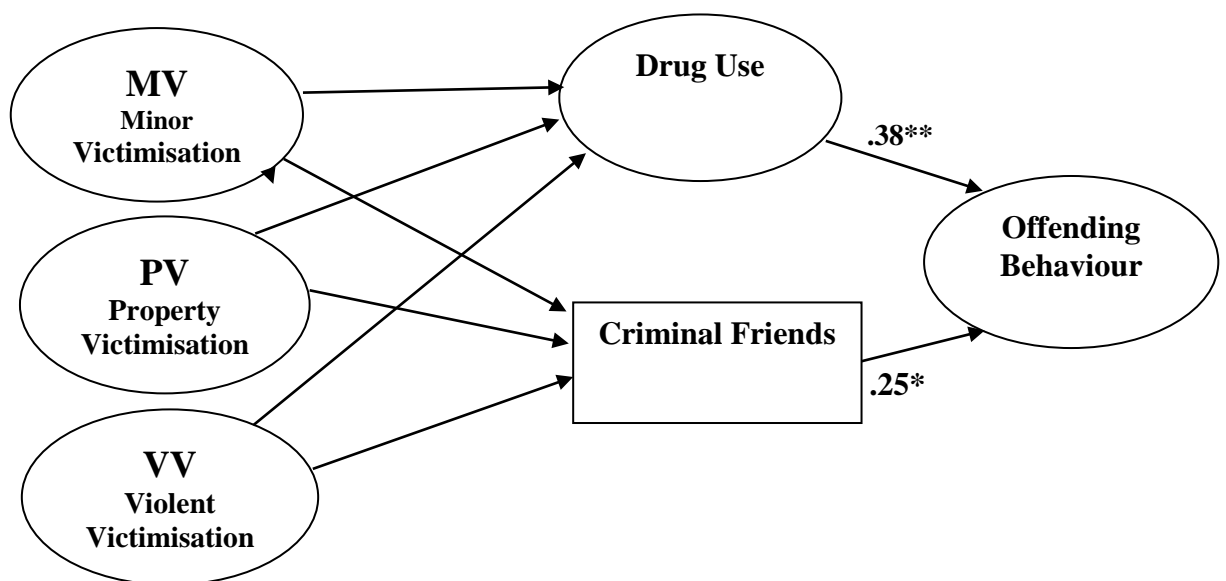
$\chi^2 = 325.474$, $df = 175$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .049 (CI = .040 - .057); SRMR = .07; CFI = .90; TLI = .86; AIC = 15056.264)

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Model 2 is an indirect model of Offending Behaviour in which Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, and Violent Victimization are hypothesized to impact on

Offending Behaviour indirectly via Drug Use Behaviour and Criminal Friends. The indirect model of Offending Behaviour offered an adequate representation of the observable covariance matrix ($\chi^2 = 358.134$, $df = 179$, $p < .001$; $RMSEA = .05$ (CI = .04-.06); $SRMR = .07$; $CFI = .86$; $TLI = .84$; $AIC = 15393.494$), however on the basis of the lower AIC value, the direct model of Offending Behaviour was deemed to be statistically superior. The indirect model also explained a lower amount of variance in Offending Behaviour (29%), a result which failed to reach the level of statistical significance ($p = .06$). Direct and indirect regression weights (along with standard errors) are presented in Table 33. In this model direct effects were observed from Drug Use Behaviour ($\beta = .38$, $p < .01$) and Criminal Friends ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$), however, no statistically significant direct effects were observed from any of the three victimisation factors on Drug Use Behaviour or Criminal Friends. Consequently no indirect effects existed from Victimisation experience to Offending Behaviour.

Figure D: Model 2 - Indirect Structural Equation Model of Offending



Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. All arrows without numerical values indicate non-significance.

Table 33: Standardized and unstandardized regression weights (with Standard Errors) for the Indirect Model of Offending Behaviour

Variables	β	B	SE
<i>Indirect Influence</i>			
Minor Victimization ==> OB via Drug Use	.11	.10	.18
Minor Victimization ==> OB via Criminal Friends	.10	.10	.17
Property Victimization ==> OB via Drug Use	.89	11.21	13.30
<i>Indirect Influence</i>			
Property Victimization ==> OB via Criminal Friends	.75	9.36	13.21
Violent Victimization ==> OB via Drug Use	-.88	-1.29	1.49
Violent Victimization ==> OB via Criminal Friends	-.77	-1.13	1.55
<i>Direct Influence</i>			
Drug Use ==> Offending Behaviour	.38**	1.70	.70
Criminal Friends ==> Offending Behaviour	.25*	.17	.06
<i>R²</i>			
Offending Behaviour, $R^2 = .27$, SE = .14, P = .06			
<i>Fit Indices</i>			
$\chi^2 = 358.134$, df = 179, p < .001; RMSEA = .05 (CI = .044 - .060); SRMR = .07; CFI = .86; TLI = .84; AIC = 15393.494)			

Note. Statistical significance: * p < .05; ** p < .01.

8.7 Chapter Summary

Six confirmatory factor models were investigated in this chapter, in order to test the aims of the study in terms of youth victimisation and offending experiences. Model C was found to be the most accurate representation of the underlying latent structure of the YVES and included an inter-correlated three-factor solution with minor victimisation experiences, property victimisation experiences, and violent victimisation

experiences reflecting the three latent factors. Table 24 showed that all twelve items displayed positive and statistically significant factor loadings on the three victimisation factors (minor, property and violent). Model F emerged as the most accurate representation of the underlying latent structure of the YOBS. This model featured a three-factor solution which was mutually correlated with property offending behaviour, theft offending behaviour, and violent offending behaviour reflecting the three latent factors. Table 27 displayed the standardized and unstandardized factor loadings for each observed variable on its respective latent variables. All eight items displayed positive and statistically significant factor loadings on the three offending behaviour factors (property, theft and violent).

Based upon all fit indices for the obtained data, Model C and Model F represented an adequate approximation of the covariation matrices. Examinations of the composite reliability of the measurement properties of both scales resulted in exhibitions of satisfactory composite reliability for all factors. Factor correlations and composite reliability were established for both the YVES and YOBS.

The current model of victimisation (Figure B) was developed and included a further two latent variables; Negative Personal Safety Attitudes (NPSA) measured by three items and Drug Use Behaviour measured via five items. Two observed variables were also included in the model: Criminal Friends, and Parental Supervision. The model of victimisation produced satisfactory model fit statistics indicating that it is an adequate representation of the obtained data and explained the following percentages of variance in scores:

- * 9.2% on Minor Victimization
- * 15% on Violent Victimization

- * 15.4% on Property Victimization.

The standardized and unstandardized regression weights for the current model of victimisation experiences are displayed in Table 30 and effect levels can be seen below:

- * Levels of parental supervision had a weak, positive, statistically significant effect on Criminal Friends and Drug Use Behaviour.
- * Criminal Friends displayed a statistically significant, positive, and moderate direct effect on Drug Use Behaviour, and a weak, negative effect on NPSA.
- * Drug Use Behaviour was found to significantly predict Property Victimization and Violent Victimization but not Minor Victimization.
- * NPSA were found to predict Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, and Violent Victimization.
- * Parental supervision was also found to influence levels of Violent Victimization via Drug Use Behaviour.

For the Structural Equation Model of Offending analysis, two distinct models of Offending Behaviour were developed (see Figure C and Figure D). Each model included four latent variables (MV, PV, VV, and Drug Use) and one observed variable (Criminal Friends). Factor loadings were presented in Table 31 and Table 32, which displayed the standardized and unstandardized regression weights for the current model of Offending Behaviour.

Model 1 was a direct model of Offending Behaviour in which Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, Violent Victimization, Drug Use Behaviour, and Criminal Friends directly impact Offending Behaviour. The direct model of Offending Behaviour produced satisfactory model fit statistics indicating that it is an adequate representation of the obtained data and explained 39% of variance in Offending

Behaviour. Violent Victimization experiences had the strongest predictive effect on Offending Behaviour, followed by Drug Use Behaviour and Criminal Friends. Model 2 was an indirect model of Offending Behaviour, which was found to be statistically inferior to Model 1 and was thus disregarded.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided the empirical investigation of the theoretical models. Procedural analysis of Confirmatory Factor Analysis was explained, as was analysis of the Structural Equation Modelling procedures. The chapter also detailed several models used to help identify the relevant factors in the prediction of youth victimisation and offending. Chapter 8 concludes the presentation of the quantitative findings of this research project. Chapter 9 will cover the qualitative element of this project and will present both the focus group methodology and findings.

Chapter 9: Focus Group Methodology and Findings

9.1 Introduction

The quantitative element of this research project involved an in-depth exploration of the reported experiences of 15-17 year olds in inner-city Dublin. It provided a demographic profile of the sample and the quantification of the nature and extent of their victimisation and offending. These findings also shed light on correlations between victimisation and gender, which formed the basis for the qualitative element of this project.

The qualitative element of the project utilised focus groups with young girls from the Dublin inner-city area. This element of the study set out to supplement the quantitative data with more detail concerning gender, in particular, girls experiences with victimisation, and to explore the ‘victim as victimiser’ question further.

This chapter will present information regarding the research design and rationale behind the use of focus groups, details of the pilot study and focus group procedure, and ethical and methodological issues encountered during the research. The chapter is split into two sections, the first of which details the above, and the second of which details the qualitative findings.

9.2 Research Design and Rationale behind the Use of Focus Groups

Young people have differing opinions on which methods are the most effective in ascertaining their views on various topics, Hill has noted that “some prefer certain methods that others dislike, while most are able to see pros and cons in most methods,

just as many research design textbooks do” (2006, p. 76). Hill (2006) also provides a breakdown of the considerations that children and young people have noted as factors that affect their views on methods used. Some of these considerations were of particular use to this piece of research, namely fairness, the wish for limited involvement, comfort with the medium, and the importance of privacy. All of these issues were taken into account when deciding upon the use of focus groups.

In terms of fairness, the researcher avoided issues involved with the sample feeling like some individuals had more opportunities to participate in the research than others, since volunteers were asked to participate. Furthermore, the wish for limited involvement was granted, as students often view research projects as a ‘get out of class card’. As a result, there were no issues with participants feeling that the research was an intrusion on their day. This was backed up by the fact that participants volunteered and were later given the chance to change their minds. The researcher felt that the use of focus groups ensured that a high number of participants would be comfortable with the medium. There is a general assumption that computer-based research is the most popular amongst young people. However, Hill has noted that in previous research “only a minority of young people favoured on-line methods for consulting them about their views. Only three of the 18 groups voted for these as a preferred method and the responses on individual questionnaires were also largely negative” (2006, p. 80). With computer-based research, issues surrounding ease of access, literacy, and functionality have to be considered, while questionnaires raise issues surrounding literacy, time, and attention levels. Finally, privacy is vital in every piece of research. Even though focus groups are performed in a group setting, privacy is ensured through a secure setting for the focus groups and the protection of the data.

The researcher felt that the use of focus groups was the best way to gain a further understanding of the female victimisation experience. Eder and Fingerson (2003) go as far as to suggest that group interviews should be the default methodological option when researching youth. Both a less threatening environment and the minimisation of the power and influence of the researcher are mentioned as reasons for this. Single-handed researchers with limited time and finance resources often turn to focus groups. They are a cost-effective way “to study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meaning around it” (Bryman, 2001, p. 338). In a focus group situation, individuals present their own views and discuss personal experiences; however, they are also in a position to hear about other people’s experiences. Based on what they hear, participants are then put in a position to re-evaluate their own standpoint and to express themselves further. This viewpoint is reiterated by Kreuger and Casey:

The focus group presents a more natural environment than that of the individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others – just as they are in real life (2000, p. 11).

With this in mind, the participants involved in the focus group research were placed in groups based on year in school. Occasionally, girls from different years were placed together due to class conflicts. However, principals were instructed to not place girls that either had never met each other or who did not like each other together, in order to maintain the most comfortable setting for the girls. Maintaining ‘the real life’ environment as much as possible during the course of the research was very important.

9.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Focus Groups

Some of the strengths of the use of focus groups include the ability to be tailored to a specific project, flexibility, and the production of rich data. It is important that focus groups allow the discussion to be tailored specifically to the sample group. This is particularly the case in terms of deciding how structured the focus group discussion should be. Highly structured discussions make it much easier to stay focused on the various research topics, while allowing for comprehensive analysis, both of which are extremely important when working with young people. Less structured discussions make the acquisition of meaningful, spontaneous responses to the research topic on hand possible, but can also lead to difficulties with data analysis, since the data collected during an unstructured session will vary from group to group. When conducting focus groups with young people, a certain amount of flexibility with regard to structure is necessary to maintain the flow of conversation and keep participants interested and comfortable. This is true of other types of participants as well, but is especially true of young people. This research project utilised a definite list of themes that was covered in every focus group session; however, these items were not always covered in the exact same order. An unexperienced researcher could have difficulty making sure that all appropriate topics are covered in each of the focus groups. Having an actual topical check-list for each group can help researchers avoid this problem. As Carey and Asbury (2012) explain, “a focus group session has elements in common with an individual interview in that the group facilitator and members ‘co-construct’ the data in a way similar to that done by an interviewer and an interviewee,” (p. 28). A final strength of the use of focus groups is the rich data that results from conducting them. The flexibility of focus groups, combined with the loose structure in comparison to other methods, allows participants to discuss items of interest in much more detail,

while the presence of the researcher as moderator allows for interesting topics to be expanded upon. Together, these characteristics lead to the creation of a much fuller picture of the issues that are being explored.

Some of the weaknesses of focus group research include potential bias, artificial environment, and the reliance of group interaction, to name a few (Hollander, 2004; Kreuger & Casey, 2000; Liamputtong, 2011). The potential for bias is strong in focus groups, due to the possibility of one or two people dominating the group discussion. Though the moderator can work towards controlling this bias, through engaging all participants, it is unavoidable at times, due to differences in personalities and reluctance on some participants' behalf to go against the dominant view that is being put forward. The focus group environment is a highly artificial environment, which is not ideal, as young people are very likely to act differently outside this environment. However, it is important to note the importance of the topic of discussion here, as this does not necessarily mean that the data will be affected in a negative manner. For example, if a researcher is trying to identify how gang members interact with one another, obviously ethnographic research would be more appropriate. However, as was the case in this research, when the topic of discussion is not particularly contentious and does not have the possibility of negative consequences attached to it, the artificial environment is less important. Finally, another negative weakness of focus groups is that they are entirely dependent on group interaction. If a group does not interact well together, or if there are reasons that a member of the group would not want to discuss an issue in front of others, problems will ensue. This is why it is important to be careful in the selection of individuals for participation in the group setting.

Though this section did not provide an exhaustive list of all the strengths and weaknesses of focus groups, it did provide insight into the ones that were most applicable to youth research. There are positive and negative elements to all methods of research. What is important is to be aware of them and to make allowances for how to deal with them in the context of each individualised research project.

9.4 Pilot Study

A group of three 15 year old girls from a secondary school in Co. Meath were engaged in a pilot study. The purpose of the pilot study was to gauge how well the format of the discussion and the language used in the questions engaged the girls. In addition to their views on the overall format, the girls' points of views on youth victimisation experiences were also obtained, in order to get a feeling of what the focus groups amongst inner-city girls might reveal.

In terms of the language used in the focus groups, the pilot study participants were questioned regarding certain words, and guidance was given to the researcher as to possible alternatives that would be more appropriate. For example, when asked what they would like to be called as a group, the preferred term was overwhelming 'teenagers' instead of young people, as the group felt like 'young people' was a professional term used by teachers and researchers. The guidance was particularly helpful in the case of slang terminology that could come up during the focus groups. The girls were also asked to define some of the common slang used amongst their age group so the researcher would not have to disrupt the flow of the discussion in the focus group sessions with inner-city Dublin girls, if a word was not understood. Some of the slang that the girls thought was important for the researcher to know, and its' meaning, is detailed in the following table.

Table 34: Slang Term Meanings

Slang Term	Meaning of Word
Marking	Way of showing ownership of smaller things and spaces, typically indoors.
Tagging	Graffiti
Nicking	Stealing
Skangers	Derogatory term; working-class youth subculture
D4ness and being D4	Snobbishness and things being expensive in a bad way
Emo	Depressed rocker-type; similar to a goth, but with less make-up

The tips regarding slang during the pilot study were very useful in the course of the focus groups. Knowing the proper terminology made the researcher more confident and the participants more comfortable.

The pilot participants were also asked about what they thought of the areas of discussion and whether they thought certain areas should be removed and if other areas needed to be added. The participants felt that the range of discussion was adequate. The session lasted approximately one hour and the following points were made by the participants during the pilot study:

- 1) Violence gets better with age with females and worse with age with males.
- 2) There is more victimisation in the city than in the suburbs.
- 3) School violence is not as big of a deal as it once was and parents do not care as much about their children getting detention or suspension.
- 4) Important areas to cover with girls included how to deal with bullying, female specific victimisation incidents like exclusion, name-calling, and attacks on reputation.

- 5) Young people do not really have anywhere to go and often get moved on by the Gardaí, even though they are not doing anything wrong.

The pilot study was effective in gauging how well the format of the discussion and the language used in the questions engaged the girls. The participants' points of view on victimisation experiences and their suggestions were also very helpful during the official focus groups. Overall, the pilot project led to the smooth-running of the focus groups. The procedure followed during the execution of the focus groups will be discussed in Section 9.6. Focus group participants will be described in detail in the next section.

9.5 Participants

In total, there were 12 focus groups with a total of 36 participants. The number of girls in the individual groups ranged from 3-4, with two groups of 2 girls occurring, due to absences⁸. Participants were selected from the schools with female pupils that also had the highest victimisation rates. The researcher decided to choose the schools in this manner, in order to guarantee a robust discussion, as girls attending schools that exhibited lower levels of victimisation might not have had very much to add on the subject, (other than what they had divulged in the survey) due to their more limited experiences. Table 35 provides a breakdown of the participants in each focus group session.

⁸ The focus groups in this study were smaller than average. This was due to a combination of factors including Principal preference for smaller groups, absences on the day, and the researcher feeling that more information would be gathered from the girls if smaller groups were used, since the time available for participation was limited to forty-five minutes maximum and repeat visits were not possible.

Table 35: Breakdown of Focus Group Participants by Age and School

School	Group Number	Age of Girls in Group	Total Number of Participants
Central Secondary School			
	Group 1	All 17	4
	Group 2	18 (2) and 17 (1)	3
	Group 3	17 (2) and 16 (1)	3
	Group 4	Both 16	2
	Group 5	All 16	3
	Group 6	17 (1) and 16 (2)	3
Total for Central	6 Focus Groups in Total	18 (2) 17 (8) 16 (8)	18 Participants in Total
Lake View Secondary School			
	Group 1	18 (1), 16 (1) and 15 (1)	3
	Group 2	17 (3) and 15 (1)	4
	Group 3	16 (1) and 15 (1)	2
	Group 4	16 (2) and 15 (1)	3
	Group 5	16 (2) and 15 (1)	3
	Group 6	16 (2) and 15 (1)	3
Total for Lake View	6 Focus Groups in Total	18 (1) 17 (3) 16 (8) 15 (6)	18 Participants in Total
Overall Total	12 Focus Groups	18 (3), 17 (11), 16 (16), 15 (6)	36 Participants

9.6 Focus Group Procedures

The procedure for the qualitative element of the research followed the format of the quantitative portion. However, since principals were made aware of the possibility of a qualitative portion of the research during the administration of the quantitative element, and already knew the researcher personally, there were no problems gaining participation.

The two schools with the highest victimisation rates (amongst those with female pupils) were identified for participation in the focus groups and phone calls were made to the principals to explain this element of the study and the facilitation of the focus groups. After the two principals agreed to participate, the researcher visited the schools to explain the research to the students and to obtain volunteers. Fourth and fifth year classes were visited for this purpose and the response was very positive. After the lists of volunteers were organised, the researcher sent a typed list to school secretaries so that a list of guardians could be formulated for consent purposes. With the help of the school secretaries, the researcher then organised consent letters to be sent to all guardians, as was done during the quantitative element. A copy of this letter can be reviewed at Appendix G.

Once the scheduling of the focus groups took place, the researcher organised the recording equipment and prepared the topics for discussion during the focus groups. The manner in which the focus groups were conducted will be discussed in the following section.

9.7 Conducting the Focus Groups

After the project was re-explained and the participants were given the opportunity to decline participation, the focus group sessions began with the participants completing a consent form, which can be viewed at Appendix I.

The female youth involved in the focus groups ultimately dictated the flow of conversation. However, there was a list of topics to be discussed, used in all groups, in order to maintain cohesion amongst all groups, and also, to provide protection against stagnation within the conversations.

Table 36: Topics Discussed in all Focus Groups

Victimisation	The girls understanding of the term Whether they have experienced any Whether people they know have experienced any How they feel it affects young people
Offending	What constitutes offending in their minds Involvement – personal and friend Why they think young people get involved in crime What they think are the biggest factors in keeping young people out of trouble
Free Time	What they do with their free time Where they spend most of it and who they spend it with Whether they feel that what you do and who you do it with affects victimisation and offending What activities they would like to have access to
Role of Adults/Safety	Does the relationship with your guardian affect decisions Does it keep you safer/less safe How they feel about the Gardaí What they think adults can do to protect young people from being victimised: home, school, community, Gardaí

All of the above topics were discussed during the sessions, which were recorded using a digital sound recorder on a laptop and then later transcribed. The participants were told that the focus groups would be recorded, prior to the beginning of the session. Showing participants how the recorder worked on the laptop and explaining that only the researcher would have access to the files, as the findings were completely anonymous and confidential (as explained in the consent form) seemed to relax the groups further. It should be noted that none of the participants seemed at all bothered that the sessions were going to be recorded. In research, it is important to realise that “recording devices are not automatically significant and imposing, nor do they inevitably encourage only certain kinds of talk” (Speer & Hutchby, 2003, p. 334). This is particularly the case when the research involves non-personal matters that are not of a sensitive nature. Though the use of recorded devices can lead to methodological

problems, this was not the case in this piece of research. Some of the ethical and methodological issues that were of concern will be discussed in the following section.

9.8 Thematic Analysis of the Focus Groups and Assessing Reliability/Validity

Generally speaking, the data analysis process involved reading and reviewing the data, asking questions about the data, and keeping notes about the data (Hardy & Bryman, 2004). Specifically, the focus group transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis at the group level.

In approaching the coding of the data, the researcher utilized a type of framework analysis, as suggested by Ritchie et al., 2003, which utilized a concept-driven coding approach, where a list of key themes and ideas were formulated before the application of codes to the text took place. The traditional method of using a color-coded system to identify the various codes used for relevant themes was also put into place.

Four main steps were involved in the overall process, which were modified from those detailed by Harding (2013). The first step in the thematic analysis process involved using concept-driven codes to identify themes discussed by participants and placing these codes into categories. This step involved reading the transcripts four times, in order to enhance familiarity with the data and establish rudimentary themes. This step also involved the creation of a table similar to the one suggested by Harding, 2013 and Liamputtong, 2011, featuring three columns: Participant, Summary, and Code. The second step in the process involved establishing whether a sufficient number of codes/categories was reached in order to make thematic analysis possible. Once this was established, the codes were placed into groups. The third step in the process involved checking and re-checking the codes and themes to determine if there were

overlaps, to decide whether or not some codes needed to be deleted, and to make adjustments as necessary. The fourth and final step involved the identification of the ways in which the various comments were both similar and different, so that final decisions could be made with regards to which categories each theme belonged to.

Inter-rater reliability was not attempted as it was determined that thematic agreement would be easily achieved amongst additional researchers, making this process unnecessary. There is limited empirical research on inter-rater reliability used in qualitative research. However, research conducted by Armstrong, et al. (1997) found that though researchers may ‘package’ themes differently, achieving close thematic agreement is typically achievable. As an alternative, the use of notes of all happenings during the focus groups, specific topical lists, and the recording of focus groups were used to consistently and reliably record observations in a dependable manner. In qualitative research, these steps lead to increased reliability, considering that “reliability means dependability of consistency” (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). Furthermore, researcher reflexivity and the coding/recoding of the data ensured that the research was rigorous. Finally, the verbatim transcription of the voice recordings ensured that participants inputs were represented accurately, enhancing the overall validity of the qualitative data (Chioncel, et al., 2003).

9.9 Ethical and Methodological Issues

As with the quantitative element of the research, the qualitative element was informed by the various Codes of Ethics provided by the Psychological Society of Ireland, the British Psychological Society, and the British Sociological Association⁹. Furthermore,

⁹ For more information regarding the specific guidance provided by the codes of ethics of these associations, please visit the following websites British Sociological Association www.britsoc.co.uk, The

the requisite DIT consent form was used again with all participants, and the researcher sought both parental and participant consent, as with the quantitative element. For more information regarding ethical issues considered in this research, please revisit Section 5.6.

In terms of methodological issues, the use of focus groups was embraced with caution. As with most research methods, there are a number of limitations to their use. Alan Bryman detailed some of these limitations in *Social Research Methods*. The most relevant limitations mentioned in this work were:

- 1) Data can be difficult to analyse.
- 2) Recordings can be more time-consuming to transcribe than individual interviews.
- 3) There are some situations where conducting focus groups would be inappropriate.
- 4) There are possible problems of group interviews such as some speakers speaking too much and others not speaking enough. (Bryman, 2001, pp. 349-350)

The first two limitations mentioned by Bryman are easily dealt with, since all they require is more time and patience. The second two limitations act as reminders to the researcher that focus group interviews are just that – group interviews. With this in mind, the influence each of the participants has on each other is something that must be taken into consideration. This influence can be seen as both a positive and negative interaction, depending on what the researcher is interested in. In this piece of research, the researcher was interested in how young girls discuss crime and victimisation during

everyday situations, since this was felt to be a more accurate portrayal of their feelings on the matter. As Gomm explains:

In more general terms it can be argued that what people do is nearly always influenced by the social setting in which they find themselves. Thus what people say in a focus group may be more like what they would say in real-life settings than what they would say to a researcher in a private one-to-one interview, and a better guide to their actions. On this consideration it is the private one-to-one interview that looks problematic rather than the group interview (2004, p. 172).

This is an example of how the influence participants have on one another should not always be seen as a negative interaction, as proved to be the case in this research.

9.10 Focus Group Findings

In analysing the focus group data, several themes emerged which will be discussed in the following sections. These themes involved victimisation, offending, free time, the role of adults and safety, and attitudes towards An Garda Síochána. The lives of the participants, both inside and outside of school, were often complicated by challenges.

9.10.1 Victimisation

All participants were asked questions about their victimisation experiences. Specifically, the girls were asked whether they had experienced any, whether people they know have experienced any, and whether it was common in their schools. Three over-arching themes emerged from the analysis of the focus group transcripts, in terms of victimisation: that victimisation tended to happen to particular types of people, that less victimisation happened in all-girls schools compared to mixed schools, and that theft, break-ins, and violent victimisation were common occurrences.

There seemed to be consensus amongst the girls that victimisation tended to happen to particular types of people, as can be seen below, in a response to the question “Who does victimisation tend to happen to?”

Quiet types, people they could walk all over and they wouldn't say anything back to them.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

Depends where you are coming from as well, even like if you are quiet depends like, I'd be quiet but I'd well stand up for myself because I'm used to it. So it depends.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

Another finding that emerged was a tendency for girls to think that all-girls schools were safer than mixed schools. It was interesting to discover that several girls mentioned that nothing at all happened at their own schools and that they thought this was because it was an all-girls school, as can be seen below:

There's no bullying at this school. It helps that this school is all girls.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 16)

In terms of the types of victimisation girls experienced at home and in their areas, break-ins and theft were commonly reported, and in some cases frequent, as one girl put it “the amount of times my house has been broken into, like my house was broken into while we were there”. Others did not have personal experience with break-ins, however, it was obvious that their perception was that break-ins were a very common occurrence in their particular area.

And there's granny flats as well across the road, there's a church up the road and the priest owns a little apartment for old people and they are always getting broken into, it's like every day ah Mrs. Somebody got broken into.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

Theft was also mentioned as a regular occurrence. However, many girls mentioned that it has not been a problem in their particular classes. This ‘class exception’ was commonly mentioned by participants and was the result of the girls being in what they called ‘a good class’ of girls, as can be seen on the following page:

I don't know about like other classes but I think in our own class it's really good. Nobody has nicked my phone, no one has ever touched it.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 17)

We're a real close class. There was only that one kinda person, so we kind of knew.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

My purse was taken out and all the money was gone out of it. It was just left out on the table so it was like someone knew where it was. I had a good idea who it was but you just can't prove it – like the bell went and we were going. But when I thought that I...I don't know, I don't know if it was that person – it could be anybody, like. There's a lot of girls in this school that would be jealous. I'd say that would be jealous of our class really. In ways of what we have and like we all get along great.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

Unfortunately, there was evidence of a disconnect between educational administrators and students in their understanding of potential threats, in that there were a few cases of students being forced to leave their bags in areas that were unattended. Unsurprisingly, several girls mentioned having their school items, money, and mobiles stolen while their bags were left unattended.

9.10.2 Offending

Girls were asked various questions about offending, including what constitutes offending in their minds, whether they or their friends had been involved in offending, why they think young people get involved in crime in the first place, and what they think the biggest factors are in keeping youth out of trouble. Generally speaking, two themes were mentioned repeatedly: peer pressure and boredom. In terms of participants' views on peer pressure, the responses were rather mixed.

There's girls that just can't say no, whereas with me, if I was pressured into doing drugs, well, they're obviously not your friends. If they are doing that – just say no – but there are girls who can't just say no.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

There's always kind of peer pressure to do anything. Like you go into town and like someone could put a line in front of you and you could be drunk and end up taking it. But like, I'd say no, because I don't agree with it but some people would just take it and remember it the next morning.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

There were also several comments made in support of previous findings that young people simply grow out of certain types of behaviour (Arnett, 2003; Moffitt, 1993).

Fourteen is when things happen. When I went into second year I was just mad, but then you grow up and realise that you have no right to be talking to people like that.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

I don't go out and I don't go out drinking on the streets or anything like that because I don't have time for it. Not that I would but I think I did that when I was 12 or 13, not all the time, not every single weekend but sometimes.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

...when I was younger I used to drink a lot more than I drink now. Just because I wasn't allowed it.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

You are stupid at that age, from 17 / 18 you learn.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

Other comments regarding maturity seemed to support the above:

You realise that the teachers have a life as well when you grow up and you think you wouldn't want someone to do something like that to your ma.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

When I was younger like I was the only one in the whole group that didn't smoke and even to this day everybody I hung around with smokes. The only reason I didn't was because I was playing football. And as well you don't want to be making a show of yourself the older you get like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

If I'm just with my friends I would either be at my house or their house. I don't like standing on the streets. Ya, when I was younger I used to do that, but as you get older you kinda get sick of it. I used to do it when I was like 14 or 15 but you still see people doing it when they are like 20 or 21 – like get a life – do you know what I mean?

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

Sadly, some respondents mentioned knowing criminals in their area well, since they grew up with them. These young people never grew out of getting into trouble, which in some cases, landed them in prison.

Sure. You'd know them. Cause it comes to the stage where it's like young fellas your age. Do you know? Like you would have grown up with them.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

....years ago, around where I lived at the fish-market, they would rob cars left overnight – doesn't happen as much anymore. Some of them have grown up, but most of them have been locked up at this stage.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 15)

In terms of why youth get involved with offending in the first place, falling into the wrong group was often mentioned as a reason why this happens, along with being friends with youth involved in offending behaviour.

It's the groups you fall into – that's the main thing. You could be the best person, then you fall in with a group and you're just gone – you let the group take over.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

Getting into trouble being a common occurrence, parents not being strict enough, and apathy towards consequences were also mentioned.

Attention. I think just they are rebellious. Like, or they are just allowed to get away with things.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

By drinking on the streets or whatever and they get caught by Gardaí and they are brought home or something and everything is fine, they get grounded for 2 or 3 days and then they are let go again. Then they just keep on doing it. But I think it's just...I don't know it's your personality really. It's personality.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

There were also examples of girls insinuating that that some youth are just prone to being 'bad', examples of all of these reasons are reflected in the comments below:

The same people that cause trouble at school cause trouble at home. They wouldn't just be showing off because they were at school – they would be the same at home.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

Sometimes I think it's just the fashion now – getting into trouble. They're like, ah ya that's all right, go out and get into trouble, get arrested, go home for a few days and then go out and do it again.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 15)

Finally, it was interesting to hear comments that gave a glimpse into what constituted ‘bad behaviour’ for respondents. During the course of all discussions, there was clear consensus amongst all groups that breaking into houses and theft were bad, for example, but drinking was not considered a bad behaviour. This could be due to the fact that the girls did not feel like their drinking was hurting anyone or causing problems for other people, unlike stealing a car or robbing a house. The following comment is a prime example of this sentiment:

.... like sometimes we’ll have a bit of drink but just like, we are not, you see I’m not really, I don’t go around like burning cars or anything I’m a good girl in that sense.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Girls mentioned that there was not enough for young people to do in their areas and nowhere to go, which they felt led to subsequent boredom and getting into trouble. As can be seen in the comments below:

Yeah, that’s why you have so much trouble though with people our age. Because there’s nowhere for us to go.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

They are just bored like, I think, there’s nowhere else to go.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 18)

Yeah they’ve nowhere else to go. So why not start trouble like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

If you want to hang out, you have to do it on the streets.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

Yeah if you have something to do to keep your mind on then you will get in a lot less trouble. You wouldn’t be on the street.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

9.10.3 Free Time

Discussions of boredom and not having enough to do often led to discussions about what the girls tended to do with their free time. Several girls also mentioned how there was not enough focus on activities for older youth and that most of the organised

activities focused on younger children. Examples of this can be seen in the following comments.

I think they should focus on older groups now, because there's a lot for younger people.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

Like there's karate and all in the area like that young kids do go to but it's from the age of like say 14 or something to about 19 or whatever - there's nothing in the area. They used to have the snooker and like everyone used to go down to that like but it's gone now and there's nothing really.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

It is really all just catering for the younger kids there's nothing for us like. That's why there are so many people around the streets. Like our club when you are 15 that's it, you either become a leader or you leave the club.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

Girls seemed to think that youth clubs were a positive asset to communities, but that their closing times were a problem. Youth clubs being closed too early was mentioned on numerous occasions, an example of which can be seen below.

That's why everyone be hanging around the streets – there's nowhere after it (the youth clubs that close at 9pm).

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 15)

Parks and other community assets also came under fire during discussions, with girls commenting that there were not enough local amenities for children/youth and that when there were amenities available in the area, they could often not be used because they were unsafe. The Irish weather was also identified as a troublemaker for free time plans.

And there's a park up the road but you wouldn't really want your kids going up there.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

Yeah there's never, like you know when you don't want to be at home but don't want to do anything either, there's nowhere to go. Me and my friends would go to the park or something but when it's raining you just have to meet around like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Yeah like around our area it's just like quiet, there wouldn't be much trouble like there used to be junkies and all down our area but like it's cleaned up a lot. Because someone bought the grounds. So they built something on it now, but they should have more facilities for kids, like there's more kids in the area now.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

During the summer there's not even a swimming pool near us that we can go to. You have to like get the bus out and back to the Aquatic Centre and that's in Blanch.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

9.10.4 Role of Adults, Safety and Attitudes towards Gardaí

The majority of the comments expressed about the Gardaí were negative in nature. The most common complaint reported by the girls, in all schools, was that it was unfair that the Gardaí constantly 'moved them on'. This seemed to happen regardless of time of day/night, area, and activity that they were actively engaged in (which was hanging around the streets or sitting somewhere talking usually). In all cases, there was a sense that the girls were moved on, simply because they were of a certain age and lived in a particular area. The above can be seen clearly in the following comments.

Firstly, several comments were made that reflect the annoyance of girls being moved on by the Gardaí, when they are not actually doing anything wrong.

Where I hang around and where I live there are Youth Centres, but they close at 7. So then we're left out and the police come and they just tell us to move on and we're not even doing nothing. We're just sitting around talking.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 15)

They treat them unfairly, the wrong people get moved on and the other ones are left there drinking and causing trouble. But they waste more time on people who are innocent.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

Girls seemed to be further annoyed by the fact that when they get moved on, there is nowhere to get moved on to. As mentioned before, they also seem acutely aware that a lot of what happens to them, happens to them because of where they live.

They wouldn't be stopping people in Malahide or Howth.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

All me and my friends, hang out at Kevin Barry flats up the road. Police would come and just say like move. It's weird. There is nowhere else to go.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 16)

I don't like my area at all, I can't wait to get out, really I can't. Because just like with my little sister she's not allowed to go up to the park on her own, that's only a five minute walk up the road, like we live in flats like and its always the same group of people that are doing bad things up in the area like.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

Respect was a major theme that emerged in the focus groups, both a lack of respect for the Gardaí, and also, a lack of respect for young people. These comments were often made in conjunction with other comments that seemed to reflect the majority of girls' views that Gardaí treat young people and adults very differently.

I think the respect is just gone for the police. You know? All around the city centre it's gone out the window.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

Several comments were made highlighting that girls felt Gardaí were being disrespectful and treating them in a particular way, simply because they were young. This was particularly the case when girls mentioned being questioned by the Gardaí, as can be seen in the following comments.

Yeah, like they always moved us. Obviously we play football, so the neighbours mightn't like it, but they moved us no matter where we went. At the time there was nowhere at all to go; the green was getting done up and all and they kept on moving us. And, one night I was walking down the road on my own and the Gard stopped me and started questioning me. Asking me where I was going and all. Like what is it to him where I'm going, I was going to the shop.
(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

They come up to ya and ask what you're doing and all. All you're doing is standing there. And if you don't live around there, they ask you to go home. This would happen around 9 at night. You're in your own area half the time and you're still told to go home.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 4, Age 16)

Hang around the area – flats. Sometimes get moved on – police come around and ask us where we live and tell us to go home.
(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

They go around like “Where are you going?” It’s none of their business -where I’m going.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

In terms of fairness and how Gardaí treat them, there were mixed views that were dependent on both the nature of the activity and where things happened, as can be seen below:

To a certain extent yeah, but they do kind of take it out like, say in my area I can understand where they are coming from, because I know what the teenagers are like in my area. But then say if you get other people and they are basing their opinions on other groups. I don’t think they do enough.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

If you have a bike, they think you robbed it. Or, if you have an Ipod, they think you robbed it.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

One of my friend’s boyfriends got her phone taken off of him, because he had his and hers in his pocket and the Gardaí thought he stole it.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 15)

To be honest I’ve never had any involvement with them but I’ve heard stories....like my boyfriend he does be hanging around just like with a bottle of coke and they assumed there was vodka in it and they made him pour it out.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Girls had the most to say when it came to the topic of parents. There were a variety of feelings expressed about parents, and many examples of parents giving youth too much freedom. Interestingly, girls who seemed to be given the most freedom appeared to wish that they had less of it and more parental supervision/supervision, as can be seen below:

Well I like my freedom but at times I feel kind of a bit, like for example my mum and my sister went over to London on Saturday to visit my dad and they came back Sunday and on Monday we had been on an overnight school trip so I haven’t really seen my mum for four days and she came home from work on Tuesday and she didn’t really like, like I haven’t seen her for four days and she didn’t even ask what I did. Because she was just too tired and just talking to my sister. Because my sister had a tantrum. So it’s just like, like I’ve done so much stuff like on Sunday I wasn’t even in Dublin, I went down to Westmeath to see my friends that live down there, I came back Sunday night and then on Monday we were on our school trip. But she doesn’t even know what we did on the school trip yet.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 17)

Some girls also expressed disappointment in being treated like adults, when they were still children. There were several examples of girls who worked outside the home, who were responsible for cooking meals for their families, and who were almost a second parent to their siblings. In these cases, the girls were very much treated like adults, but not in the way that they would wish. They had responsibilities and were often left in charge of their households, while their parent was out. This was particularly the case with girls living in single parent households, as one girl explains below:

Yeah, like I know people say that there's a stigma around single parent families but I think it's true, especially if you have brothers and sisters because like one parent can't keep an eye on everyone and I think it's the oldest children in the families that suffer because the attitude is oh you are almost adults anyway. I am basically treated like an adult especially because I like pay some of my wages up towards the bills and my mam is like as long as you are not doing anything really bad and you come home like, if I wanted to like I could do what I want, anything.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

....sometimes I can drink too much and I come home and I'm like off my face but they never noticed because they don't really see me.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Sometimes I'd lie and say I was going to the pub because she hates me being on the street.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

Like you have to get away from them sometime, you can't be dependent every single minute of the day. And you'd go out and see your friends and your friends could cause trouble and you can get in trouble. And you'd probably join in with them as well.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

9.10.5 Gender Differences

The girls asserted that there were differences between males and females. They also all seemed to be very aware of the changes that have occurred in recent times, as opposed to when their mothers or grandmothers were young. It was encouraging to hear several comments that reflected positive feminist viewpoints. However, some of the comments

highlighted the fact that even though females and males are becoming more equal in positive ways, they are also becoming more equal in negative ways.

We're just as equal as men – I think that's what the point is – people are saying well, if they can do it, we can do it.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

It would be the same for boys and girls but like girls can, like girls can fend more for themselves now and they sort of have to learn that because the way things are now in society and all.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 18)

There seemed to be agreement that it was worse for a girl to be involved in some things, such as being arrested. Many girls felt that this was still quite negative for girls, but that it was no big deal for boys:

It's nothing to the boys – isn't it not? – to get like arrested or anything. That's nothing to them.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

When violence was discussed, it appeared that fights between girls were common, but still differed greatly from fights between boys in their frequency and nature. For example, hair pulling was mentioned as commonly occurring in fights between girls, which obviously does not occur commonly during fights between boys. The use of weapons, excessive violence, and car crime were also mentioned as mainly occurring during boy fights.

Girls are getting into a lot of trouble though nowadays.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

I never seen a girl in a robbed car.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

I'd say with guys like if they were to get into anything it would be just like a bit, it would be more physical and just a bit of messing but then guys can just be able to let things go. But I think with girls it starts off like badly, and a lot of it is mind games, and it's really bitchiness and then I think girls get into physical fights like. Like more easily than people think. And I just think girls are, they think lads would be worse, but I'd say girls are actually because they bring in everything, like verbal and physical.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 17)

(Girls would engage in) Arguments and just scraps like. But it wouldn't get to giving each other black eyes or anything just pulling hair like that's about it. It wouldn't get too serious.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 17)

Ya, cause young fellas use weapons, but girls wouldn't.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 4, Age 15)

I think young ones stay in much more than young fellas do – they are kinda out all the time and they don't watch what they say to people either – on the streets.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Boys would be more violent. I think they would go in with their fists and the girls would be screaming at each other before and then they would start like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

It was interesting to note that participants discussed girls in groups and girls by themselves differently. There were many examples of a group of girls being much more of a threat than single girls.

Girls in groups are like young fellas.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

Say if we were in a group and we saw someone walking down the street on their own – you'd say to them “the state of her” or something. Then she would probably come over and punch ya.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 15)

There was also agreement that both females and males are highly influenced by trying to impress members of the opposite sex around them, both in school (if the school is mixed), in the local area, and out in town. Unfortunately, this often tends to lead to bad behaviour.

Both boys and girls get into trouble. Showing off in front of each other. I think I'm great – I'll show off in front of him. Or, I think I'm great – I'll show off in front of her.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

An obvious theme that emerged from the focus groups was that behaviour tended to differ between what happens at school and what happens in town, mainly in terms of frequency. Several responses also seemed to support the assumption that alcohol

played a part in violence between girls that occurred in town. This is not to say that fights at school did not happen, as can be seen in the examples below:

I live near Mountjoy – fights are very common. It can happen at any time, day or night. It's mostly young people. Teenage girls fighting over a man – very stupid.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

There was a fight on the middle of the road here one day, someone dragged them out of the school and two girls were on the middle of the ground absolutely killing each other and one of the teachers had to get out of the car and break it up. I was like my god! That was horrible.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

However, violence occurring in town was mentioned more regularly by participants and it was also often mentioned as being more serious in town than at school.

In this school there's never been any fights, but like out and about and in town, and on buses and stuff, you see girls just going at each other.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Town on a Saturday night, I don't know, girls should be bleeding locked up for the way they go on in town on a Saturday night walking through Temple Bar, making a show of themselves. Girls are worse than fellas. They really are worse than fellas these days. Getting themselves terrible names. The things they would be doing in the street and sometimes police just walk by them and don't even say anything to them.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

In town on a drunken night out, if a young one like – you know yourself – went into town one night and she was after being with this fella and like they finished and all and then there was another one that got with him and she like comes over to her and says I'll put a bottle in your face cause your looking nice tonight – do you know that type of way? Like and it's nothing to put a bottle into someone's face anymore. They will just break a bottle and shove it into your face.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

Participants views on how times have changed and how girls act today versus in the past were very interesting. As mentioned previously, it was encouraging to hear examples of strong feminist viewpoints emerging from the discussions, however, again it was also obvious that some of the changes in girls' behaviour today are in no way positive.

If I want to slap someone, I will. I don't think violence is the best option, I think communication is. I'm just saying.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 15)

I'd say it's a new thing but I'm not sure, like me personally I've never got into a physical fight with a girl. And like I wouldn't want to because I think it's really undignified but I don't know I think it's a kind of image thing....

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

The way of thinking was different. Girls don't fight, girls don't eat on the street. Girls don't, don't, don't. The times are changing. There is more freedom now.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 15)

I wouldn't call girls nowadays ladies. Girls go on like fellas nowadays, worse half the time like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

I don't think they should be fighting and all. They should go on like ladies.....

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

9.10.6 What Can Be Done?

Girls were also asked questions about what they think adults can do to protect young people from being victimised at school, at home, and in the community. Girls were also asked if there was anything that they wish adults would do differently, in terms of how they treat all young people. In this case, comments reflected on their feelings that adults seemed to not only have a distinct distrust of young people, but also, that they painted them all with the same brush, even though the majority of youth do not cause trouble. This can be seen in the comments below.

Lighten up. We have to be doing something all the time. We can't just be sitting around talking – doing nothing. They all think we are conspiring against them.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 5, Age 16)

I don't know, I know this sounds a bit pessimistic but I don't think anything would change, because like you said sports, like if things are set up I personally don't think the people are going to, that teenagers are going to do them.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 17)

Just stricter rules like, not saying, I don't want to get anybody into trouble like but our old principal was strict like but everybody kind of respected him even like people with reputations like, he had a way around it like. But now since he's gone like the school has, and the rules have gone downhill. It's just over your head like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

There were mixed opinions about what parents might be able to do in order to prevent offending behaviour. While some girls seemed to think that a father figure in the household might help prevent offending, other girls seemed to think that their mothers had more than enough authority.

Especially like if you have a lone parent, if you haven't got a father figure there's more trouble in the house then. Because you haven't got really the authority. Whereas if you had a father role like there'd be more authority and there'd be more respect in the house like.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

I've never had a father figure. And I wouldn't cross my Ma. My Ma can well stick up, she's a small woman but I'll tell you, you wouldn't cross her (laughing).

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

Several girls expressed strong feelings about the parents being to blame for their children's bad behaviour. This can be seen in the examples below.

If you are growing up and your ma and da are going to the pub and getting drunk. You are going to grow up thinking that it's all right to be doing that.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

If the parents are out until 3-4 in the morning they don't know what their kids are at.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 2, Age 17)

An example of the misunderstandings that often occur between parents and their children primarily because of the age gap between the two can be seen in the following comment. Unfortunately, this is one of the possible reasons that parents inadvertently dismiss their children's concerns about real issues and problems.

Sure like my ma and dad, when I go home and say like someone stole my stuff, like my books or whatever, they say no, no one would do that, you must have just lost the thing. But they do. They don't understand what people are like these days. Like my da definitely doesn't.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 6, Age 16)

Finally, it was disheartening to hear many girls sounding very pessimistic about what difference parents and other people in the community can actually make to preventing youth from getting into trouble.

They just get used to it – do you know what I mean. They just get called. Like my friends most of them half of them – no all of them have been arrested – and like their mas, well most of them are 18 and they can just go out and their mas won't even know about it. Do you know what I mean? But then if they are under 18 their ma gets called down to the station, but they are let back out a half hour later. Do you know what I mean? Nothing is done about it.

(Central Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 17)

There are some people that, new clubs and that will sort them, they will start going but there's others that have just gotten too far that they are not bothered. They don't care. They will go on drugs and get locked up eventually.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 3, Age 16)

On a positive note, the solution presented by one girl would be very easy to achieve.

Give young people better opportunities and possibilities and options.

(Lake View Secondary School Participant, Group 1, Age 18)

9.11 Chapter Summary

The following issues were taken into account when deciding upon the use of focus groups:

- Considerations noted by children and young people as factors that affect their views on research methods including: fairness, the wish for limited involvement, comfort with the medium, and the importance of privacy.
- Focus groups offer both a less threatening environment and the minimisation of the power and influence of the researcher.

- Single-handed researchers with limited time and finance resources often turn to focus groups.
- Strengths of focus groups such as the ability to be tailored to a specific project, flexibility, and the production of rich data.
- Weaknesses of focus groups such as potential bias, artificial environment, and the reliance of group interaction.

A pilot study was performed in order to gauge how well the format of the discussion and the language used in the questions engaged the girls. Overall, the pilot project led to the smooth-running of the focus groups. The participants were detailed in Section 9.5 and the procedure followed during the execution of the focus groups was discussed in Section 9.6. Finally, how the focus groups were actually conducted was detailed in Section 9.7, which was followed with a discussion of the Thematic Analysis in Section 9.8. Some of the ethical and methodological issues encountered during this portion of the research were discussed in Section 9.9, including:

- Difficulties with data analysis.
- Transcription of recordings being very time consuming.
- Some participants speaking too much and others not speaking enough.

Section 9.10 dealt with the focus group findings. Three over-arching themes emerged from the analysis of the focus group transcripts, in terms of victimisation: that victimisation tended to happen to particular types of people (quiet types for example), that less victimisation happened in all-girls schools compared to mixed schools, and that theft, break-ins, and violent victimisation were common occurrences. Themes emerging in terms of offending included:

- Peer pressure and boredom.
- Young people simply grow out of certain types of behaviour.

- Falling into the wrong group.
- Being friends with young offenders and parents not being strict enough.
- Apathy towards consequences and the insinuation that some youth are just prone to being 'bad'.

Girls mentioned that there was not enough for young people to do in their areas and nowhere to go, which they felt led to subsequent boredom and getting into trouble. Several girls also mentioned how there was not enough focus on activities for older youth and that most of the organised activities focused on younger children. Girls seemed to think that youth clubs were a positive asset to communities, but that their closing times were a problem. Girls also commented that there were not enough local amenities for children/youth and that existing ones were often unsafe.

The majority of the comments expressed about the Gardaí and parents were negative in nature. The most common complaint was that it was unfair that the Gardaí constantly 'moved them on'. There was a sense that the girls were moved on, simply because they were of a certain age and lived in a particular area. Girls seemed to be further annoyed by the fact that when they get moved on, there is nowhere to get moved on to. Lack of respect was also mentioned as problematic. There were a variety of feelings expressed about parents, and many examples of parents giving youth too much freedom and disappointment at being treated like adults in terms of household responsibilities, when they were still children.

Participants seemed to be very aware of the changes that have occurred in recent times, as opposed to when their mothers or grandmothers were young. They asserted that there were differences between males and females, as the following show:

- Some comments reflected positive feminist viewpoints, while others highlighted the fact that females are also becoming more equal to males in negative ways.
- Fights between girls were common, but still differed greatly from fights between boys in their frequency and nature.

- Both females and males are highly influenced by trying to impress members of the opposite sex around them, often leading to bad behaviour.

Another theme that emerged from the focus groups was that behaviour tended to differ between what happens at school and what happens in town and that alcohol played a part in violence between girls that occurred in town. Girls were also asked questions about what they think adults can do to protect young people from being victimised at school, at home, and in the community, if there was any way in which they wished adults would treat young people differently, and how parents affected youth offending. The overall feeling was of pessimism in this regard. Comments reflected their feelings that:

- Adults seemed to not only have a distinct distrust of young people, but also, that they painted them all with the same brush, even though the majority of youth do not cause trouble.
- In terms of offending prevention, some girls blamed parents - period, while some blamed single mothers.

9.12 Conclusion

Chapter 9 detailed the use of focus groups with teenage girls from the Dublin inner-city area. Information regarding the research design and rationale behind the use of focus groups, details of the pilot study, general focus group and thematic analysis procedures, ethical and methodological issues encountered during the research, and focus group findings were presented in the chapter.

Chapter 10 will provide a detailed discussion of both the qualitative findings discussed in this chapter, as well as the quantitative findings discussed in previous chapters. In each discussion chapter, the findings will be discussed, along with the implications, limitations and future research directions that apply to each section.

Chapter 10: Discussion of Findings

10.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was twofold: firstly, to explore the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin, and secondly, to develop an understanding of what factors predict youth victimisation and offending. The above were accomplished through the creation of a survey, the development of the YVES, YOBS, and structural equation models of victimisation and offending, and the undertaking of focus group research. The sample population included young people living in inner-city Dublin, specifically Dublin 1, Dublin 2, Dublin 7, and Dublin 8. Data was collected using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

This chapter will be broken down into four parts, beginning with a discussion of the survey findings. The chapter will then move on to a discussion of the development of the YVES and the structural equation model of victimisation. This section will be followed by a discussion of the development of the YOBS and the structural equation model of offending. The qualitative research findings will make up the last substantive portion of this chapter. A detailed discussion of the implications of the research and how this research relates to similar research in the area will be provided throughout, along with the various limitations and future research directions. The various limitations, strengths, and recommendations for the research project as a whole will be presented in the conclusion chapter, along with future research directions and the contribution of this research to the field.

10.2 Discussion of Survey Findings

10.2.1 Summation of Victimization Findings

The most commonly reported family and neighbourhood victimisation experiences were a family member being hit or beaten up while outside of the home (19%), a sibling being bullied at school (21%), family property being damaged (21%), neighbourhood being sprayed with graffiti (51%), and hearing gunshots being fired in the neighbourhood (40%). Minor victimisation experiences were reported frequently, with worrying levels of repeat minor victimisation experiences being reported in all three categories:

- 56% of the sample reported being laughed at; 13% more than six times.
- 42% of the sample reported being teased; almost 10% more than six times.
- Almost 60% of the sample reported being called names; 16% more than six times.

The breakdown of reported property victimisation experiences included 15% of the sample reporting mobile phone theft, 20% of the sample reporting property being damaged purposely, and 5% of the sample reporting having their bike stolen. Violent victimisation experiences were reported at high levels, with 14% of the sample reporting being threatened by someone holding an object that could be used as a weapon, 34% of the sample reporting having suffered at least one verbal threat to hurt, 26% of the sample reporting being hit for no reason, and 43% reporting being in a physical fight. These findings reveal high levels of victimisation overall and are quite shocking in terms of the levels of threats and violent victimisation.

10.2.2 Summation of Offending Findings

There were high levels of vandalism offending behaviour reported, with 42% of the sample reporting damaging property and 15% of the sample reporting breaking windows. Lower levels of theft offending behaviour were reported, with only 5% of the sample reporting stealing a bike, breaking-in and stealing, or joyriding. In all cases of theft offending behaviour, the majority of the sample had never taken part in the behaviour. Violent offending behaviour was reported at high levels, with 43% of the sample reporting being in a fight, 40% reporting making verbal threats, and almost 10% of the sample reporting making verbal threats with a weapon. Though the theft offending levels were reassuringly low, the threats and violent offending levels were quite high, as were the levels of property damage. These findings indicate high levels of the most worrisome types of offending.

10.2.3 Comparison of Findings with Similar Research

Data on youth crime in Ireland is limited and is primarily available from various youth reports, mainly based from Garda Youth Diversion Project statistics, and records held by An Garda Síochána. As mentioned previously, obtainment of youth crime data in Ireland is further hindered by the fact that a national youth victimisation survey has yet to take place in this country. This is unsurprising considering that a National Crime Victimisation Survey does not occur on a regular basis, nor does Ireland participate in the International Crime Victimisation Survey. Lack of participation in these surveys is indicative of the low likelihood of a large-scale survey of youth to take place in the near future. Despite these limitations, a snapshot of recent youth crime trends in Ireland is provided next. In an effort to compare the findings revealed in this study to similar

research, some of the corresponding statistics found in the seminal literature will also be detailed.

The Working with Communities to Reduce Youth Offending report provides a picture of detected youth crime in Ireland, using statistics from the diversion programmes annual monitoring report. In 2009, offending rates were detailed as follows: alcohol related offences 18%, public order offences at 10%, criminal damage at 11%, and minor assault at 4%. These rates were quite different than those reported in the Progress Report on Garda Youth Diversion Project Development 2009—2011, which revealed rates of 12% for assaults, 22% for theft, and almost 50% for public order and alcohol related offences. This report also featured youth having anti-social friends at 6% and reported the vast majority of offenders (77%) as being male. In 2006, the largest category of juvenile offences were also alcohol related crimes, which accounted for 20% of all juvenile crime (An Garda Síochána, 2006).

In terms of the review of the seminal works, findings revealed from the *Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime* discovered that approximately half of the youth in their sample had been victimised in the previous year. The study also revealed that victimisation was closely related to delinquency and that boys were approximately twice as likely to be victimised as girls (Smith et al., 2001). These findings conflicted with those reported in *More Sinned Against than Sinning*, which found that 82% of Glasgow youth had experienced victimisation in the past year. The Glasgow study also featured other relevant findings including: 84% of respondents offending never, or one to two times, 30% of youth being bullied, 20% having a bag snatched, and 17% having a bike stolen (Hartless, et al., 1995). High levels of victimisation were reported by Maung (1995) as well, with one third of the sample reporting being assaulted and one

fifth reporting something being stolen. The most important findings to come out of this research were: that the majority of assaults against young people happened at or near school, that the perpetrators were already known to the victim, that the perpetrators were of the same age and sex as the victim, that self-reported offending was one of the strongest correlates of victimisation, and that parental supervision seemed to reduce risks overall.

Direct comparisons are difficult considering different terminology, measurement, timeframes, and types of samples were used in these studies and the current research. However, from these findings and previous research, it is clear that the majority of assumptions about youth victimisation are accurate, namely:

- 1) That youth rates of victimisation are high, particularly for minor and violent victimisation and that youth offending rates are high, particularly for vandalism and violent offending.
- 2) Self-reported victimisation rates exceed those based on official crime reports.
- 3) Males tend to be victimised and tend to offend more often than females.
- 4) Perpetrators are often the same age and sex as the victim.
- 5) Offending and victimisation are inherently linked.

10.2.4 Discussion of Differences

In terms of differences explained by area, the vast majority of the young people who made up this sample lived in or near the city centre. As such, the sample is made up of a homogenous group that cannot be separated and analysed. Furthermore, as all of the young people were by and large from the one area, there was no need to make comparisons amongst them.

In terms of the living situation, there were no differences among any of the variables in terms of whether or not young people lived with their fathers, however, young people who did not live with their mothers were found to be more likely to be a victim of minor victimisation incidents. This finding was interesting, as much research has focused on the victimisation impact on young people who do not live with their fathers. Furthermore, rates of violent offending showed differences that approached significance, with young people not living with their fathers reporting higher levels of violent offending. Research undertaken by Flouri and Buchanan (2002) found that involvement by fathers in young people's lives provides a 'buffering effect' which has the added bonus of protecting children from extreme victimization. Though the findings in this research looked specifically at the impact of whether young people lived with their fathers (not whether they spent time with them), it would be plausible to assume that in the majority of cases, fathers who live with their children are more likely to be in a position to spend time with them, thus providing this protection from victimisation. Since research suggests that victims and offenders are often one in the same (Dempsey, Fireman, & Wang, 2006; Esbensen & Huizinga, 1991; Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991; Smith et al., 2001), the assumption might also be made that involved fathers might prevent or at least minimise youth engagement in violent offending as well. It should be noted that, generally speaking, this finding contradicts Lauritsen's research which used data from the National Crime Victimization Survey to discover that victimisation rates are higher for children living in single-parent families than in two-parent homes (2003), as only one type of victimisation seemed to be affected by whom the young people lived with. However, based on the qualitative findings in this research, there does seem to be at least some correlation between single-parent families and victimisation and offending.

Young people's living arrangements were considered again, when whether or not they lived with a brother or sister was investigated. Three statistically significant differences were identified when individuals who live with a brother and those who do not live with a brother were compared in terms of a range of variables including the three victimisation scores, offending, parental supervision, drug use, NPSA, and attitudes towards Gardaí. Findings revealed that young people who do not live with a brother experience higher levels of minor victimisation. There were statistically significant differences in terms of drug use and safety attitudes as well. Results indicated that young people living with a brother have slightly higher levels of drug use. This finding could be explained in a number of ways. It could simply be a matter of more access to drugs, if the brother is supplying them, or it could also be due to young people being more confident in approaching drug dealers, if they have a brother to protect them if things go wrong. The latter explanation would correspond with young people feeling safer, if they lived with a brother (fewer negative safety attitudes). The fact that those young people who live with a brother feel safer, indicates that young people could be using their relationship with their brother as a means of protection. On the other hand, there were no differences when living with a sister was considered, which is interesting considering the findings concerning living with a brother. Again, this could be due to the protective factor that a brother might provide that a sister might not be able to (particularly when violence is involved) due to gender differences.

How might we think about the gender difference in youth experiences? According to the research literature, the types of victimisation males experience more tend to be more confrontational, while those experienced more by females tend to be less immediate and less face-to-face (Besag, 2006; Chapell et al., 2006; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Garandeanu & Cillessen, 2006). On the presumption that most of such

behaviour is within-gender, it may be a difference of style by perpetrator's gender. The qualitative findings revealed that there is an equalisation between the genders in terms of victimisation and offending, with girls feeling more at ease with the acceptability of physical altercations. Even still, there are differences in the physical altercations that occur between girls, namely the lack of use of weapons and behaviour such as hair pulling that boys do not engage in. Similar to findings revealed by Anderson, et al. (1994) this research could have missed out on some of these physical altercations due to the manner in which the questionnaire addressed violence. The questions in the survey failed to specifically address behaviours that girls partake in, when incidents turn violent, such as hair pulling and scratching. Girls may not consider these sorts of behaviours as 'being in a physical fight' and as such, they may not have answered this question positively to reflect this. Furthermore, the qualitative findings support this line of reasoning, pointing out that girls engage in frequent hair pulling when things escalate to a violent level and that name calling and meanness are commonplace.

Further gender differences were discovered when frequency of victimisation and offending were considered. Independent samples t-test scores were compared for all three categories of victimisation (minor, property, violent) and offending (vandalism, theft, violent), and in all cases, the differences found between genders were statistically significant. In comparing victimisation experiences, females scored lower than boys in all cases. Similarly, when scores were compared for offending behaviour, boys scored higher than girls, once again. These findings reveal that with all types of victimisation and offending, males experience higher levels than females. What is interesting is that in all cases the differences were small ($\text{Eta Squared} \leq .02$), except in the case of violent victimisation which was moderate ($\text{Eta Squared} = .04$).

Another revelation that occurred during the gender differences analysis was the discovery that for boys and girls, violent victimisation and violent offending were the most common incidents for both genders. The link between victimisation and offending has been firmly established by previous empirical research (Chen, 2009; Jennings, Piquero, & Reingle, 2012; Maldonado-Molina, et al., 2010; Shaffer & Ruback, 2002; Zhang, Welte, & Wieczorek, 2001). Furthermore, the structural equation model of offending behaviour established a strong link between victimisation experiences and offending behaviour by showing that violent victimisation acts as a strong predictor of offending. This is further supported by research which has shown that the likelihood of violent victimisation increases with the seriousness of offending (Huizinga & Jakob-Chien, 1998) and that there are direct pathways between violent victimisation and offending (Victim Support, 2007). The fact that both genders experience violent victimisation and violent offending to an equal degree (in that it is the most common occurrence for both) provides strong support for the link between victimisation and offending.

Differences in scores were also found between males and females for drug use and negative personal safety attitudes. Independent samples T-test scores revealed a significant difference in scores between the two genders, with females scoring higher than males for drug use and males scoring higher than females for negative personal safety attitudes. It should be noted that smoking was included in the Drug Use Measure, which might explain why girls received higher scores for drug use. This is in line with current research being undertaken at the University of Leeds that has shown that teen girls are twice as likely to smoke as teen boys (Laurance, 2004). In terms of negative personal safety attitudes, a possible explanation is that males experience more incidents of a violent nature, which could lead to feeling less safe. Research supporting

this tendency for boys to feel less safe than girls was recently undertaken by Garckija and Raižienė (2013).

The final gender differences were seen when looking at the incidents that bothered young people the most. There could be many explanations for females stating that their self-confidence was 'harmed a lot' by their victimisation, three times more than males. This could be due to the types of victimisation that females noted had bothered them the most, the majority of which were being laughed at, teased, and called names, all incidents that have been proven to harm self-confidence (Analitis, et al., 2009) and can also lead to psychosomatic problems (Gianluca & Tiziana, 2013). Males did state that being laughed at, teased, and called names was often a problem, and in fact they experienced these incidents more often than girls; however, they found them less bothersome than girls. This finding is interesting because it is contrary to research on boys undertaken by McMahon, et al., (2012), which showed that boys that had experienced bullying victimisation were four times more likely to self-harm than those who have not suffered victimisation, indicating a strong negative impact on their self-esteem and mental health. On the other hand, being in a physical fight was commonly noted by boys as the incident that bothered them the most, and would also be one in which a lot of attention could be derived from, possibly explaining why 11% of males felt that their victimisation improved their self-confidence 'a lot'. At first glance, the fact that an average of 8% of all these young people felt that victimisation had improved their self-confidence 'a lot' appears to be a paradox. However, if young people who have been victimized receive more attention than usual, from at least some people in their lives (friends, parents, teachers, Gardaí, for example) their positive reaction to victimisation becomes more understandable.

10.2.5 Discussion of Free Time, Routine Activities, Adults and Safety, and Attitudes toward the Gardaí

Positive significant relationships were found between both school week and weekend curfews and all types of offending, with a particularly strong relationship found between school week curfew and total offending. Interestingly, while other forms of victimisation were not affected, minor victimization was significantly related to the weekday curfew. Stricter parental/guardian curfews during the school week could possibly be an indicator of stricter controls in the home, which might influence levels of both victimization and offending, by restricting activities outside the home. Alternatively, stricter controls could be a result of more wayward children. A similarly significant relationship was found between the weekend curfew and offending, with the strongest relationship with minor offending. However, it is interesting to note that in the case of the weekend curfew, no significant relationship was found with violent offending. Curfews are an important element of youth lifestyle. Since young people spend the majority of their time in school, curfews play a large role in dictating how the rest of their time is spent. Research has found that regular unsupervised socializing outside the home is typical of the youth lifestyle that appears to create the most risk of involvement in offending (Mahoney et al., 2004; Osgood & Anderson 2004; Wikström & Butterworth, 2006). This has been supported further by research highlighting unsupervised, unstructured socialization and crime and delinquency (Anderson & Hughes, 2009; Hay and Forrest, 2008; Osgood & Anderson, 2004).

There are also certain elements of a youth lifestyle that increase risks of both victimisation and offending. Spending time away from family members, in public places, particularly at night, and hanging around with people that have a tendency to make the same lifestyle choices has proven to increase victimisation risk (Hindelang,

Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978, pp. 251-264). As this is exactly what youth tend to do before their curfews, it is easy to see how youth lifestyles directly affect youth risks.

These aforementioned findings indicate that not only do young offenders tend to stay out late at night, but they also appear to be hyper-sensitive to lack of respect from others. Minor victimization is made up of the incident types that, at least in some people's minds, are the least serious. However, these types of victimization are also the ones that some young people find particularly hard to handle. More importantly, they can all be seen as ways to disrespect someone, through laughing at them, teasing them, or calling them names. All of these behaviours can lead to retaliatory victimisation but as with most youth experiences, they are often considered not as serious as equivalent adult experiences. There are many difficulties that only youth victims have to face. Not only do young people have to deal with issues such as being at a higher risk of victimisation, coupled with fewer ways to deal with being victimised, they also have to learn how to manage these difficulties within a system that tends to underestimate the rates, repercussions, and levels of seriousness of youth victimisation. All of these elements can lead to both an overwhelming feeling of being unsafe in school and a distrust of adults, since they could be seen as incapable, unable or unwilling to help the young person avoid being victimised. The low levels of trust and respect for the Gardaí must surely affect youth feelings towards safety in general. If there is consensus that either the young people are being treated differently than adults and/or are being treated unfairly, this leaves most young people in a position to distrust all adults when it comes to improving their feelings of safety.

10.2.6 Implications, Limitations and Future Research

The differences between youth experiences have led to the establishment of risk indicators. These indicators should be used to help identify those young people who are more at risk and take precautions to prevent victimisation and future offending. For example, this study has shown that victimisation plays a major role in the development of offending behaviour and drug use; therefore, victimisation prevention policies would also promote reduced offending and drug use prevention. Furthermore, if youth are encouraged to report victimisation incidents, larger numbers of these types of incidents can be identified at much earlier stages. Earlier identification will lead to early effective intervention measures being put into place, which in turn, will lead to decreases in both offending behaviour and drug use. Clearly, the identification of risk indicators has strong implications for both policy and practice, as can be seen in the example above and in future sections detailing the implications for research, such as Section 10.3.3, Section 10.4.3, and Section 10.5.2.

Limitations of this portion of the research include both methodological concerns and design issues. Though this survey was not unduly long, there should be more emphasis on designing surveys specifically for young people and their attention-spans. If young people are not used to participating in surveys, multiple pages appear daunting to them, which can lead to poor response rates.

Another methodological concern is that this survey was completed by students, by hand. In this day and age, young people would probably be more responsive to an electronic survey. This could be conducted easily at schools that have computer labs, and it could also be conducted through the use of research laptops. Though this might be more time-consuming at the data collection phase, it would be much more time-

efficient at the data input and analysis stage. It would probably be more enjoyable for the young people as well, which is important and should be taken into consideration.

Future research should take into consideration all of the above and should also be more specific in its focus. There were sections of this survey that were deemed unnecessary at the data analysis stage. Future research should not ask anything that could not be used effectively, as this is a waste of time for both researchers and participants.

10.3 Discussion of the Development of the YVES and the Structural Equation Model of Victimisation

10.3.1 Development of the YVES

Before testing of the theoretical models of victimisation could take place, it was necessary to establish the construct validity for the YVES. This was achieved through the use of confirmatory factor analysis techniques, as was the determination that all required variables within the appropriate latent variable frameworks were accommodated appropriately.

In order to test the aims of the current study in regards to youth victimisation experiences, three confirmatory factor models were investigated. Model A was a one-factor model, Model B was a two-factor model, and Model C was a three-factor model. Model C provided an inter-correlated three-factor solution with minor victimisation experiences (three items), property victimisation experiences (four items), and violent victimisation experiences (five items) reflecting the three latent factors. Model C emerged as the most accurate representation of the underlying latent structure of the Youth Victimization Experience Scale (YVES). This model included an inter-correlated three-factor solution with minor victimisation experiences, property

victimisation experiences, and violent victimisation experiences reflecting the three latent factors. Based upon all fit indices for the obtained data, Model C was determined to be an adequate approximation of the covariation matrix.

Parameter estimates were also used to determine the adequacy of this model. The standardized and unstandardized factor loadings for each observed variable on its respective latent variables showed that all twelve items displayed positive and statistically significant factor loadings on the three victimisation factors (minor, property and violent). The current research also examined the composite reliability of the measurement properties of the scale. The results from the evaluation of the composite reliability for the YVES revealed that the YVES exhibited satisfactory composite reliability for each factor (Minor, Property, and Violent).

Moderate correlations were observed between the Minor victimisation factor and both the Property victimisation, and Violent victimisation factors while a moderately-strong association was observed between the Property victimisation and Violent victimisation factors.

10.3.2 Development of the Structural Equation Model of Victimisation

A primary objective of the study was to understand the development of victimisation experiences. In order to do that, a theoretical model was constructed as described in Figure B. SEM analysis results showed that the model of victimisation experiences was a good fit of the data. The CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR results were within the appropriate ranges indicative of adequate model fit and the Chi-Square-to-df ratio was less than 2:1. An adequate amount of variance was explained by this model, for each of the three groupings of victimisation experiences. The model explained 9% of variance

in minor victimisation scores, 15% of variance in Property Victimization scores, and 15% of variance in Violent Victimization scores. These findings suggest that the factors described by the Victimization model were appropriate distinguishing constructs in the development of this model, which offers an explanation of what may lead to victimisation experiences.

Along with aiming to investigate the theoretical predictions with regards to the factors hypothesised to be vital in the development of youth victimisation, the investigation of the empirical model of victimisation was primarily interested in identifying the organisation of the factors used to measure victimisation by examining the pathways (both direct and indirect) between Parental Supervision, Criminal Friends, Drug Use, and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes and the three types of victimisation (Minor, Property and Violent). Ten statistically significant effects were observed: nine direct effects and one indirect effect.

The first and second direct effects observed were between Parental Supervision and Drug Use Behaviour and Parental Supervision and Criminal Friends. The findings have established that there is a positive relationship between parental supervision and both drug use and criminal friends. The sole indirect relationship, which was related to the first two direct effects, was weak, and was observed between parental supervision and violent victimisation via drug use, which suggests that the pathway from parental supervision to violent victimisation may be mediated by drug use behaviour. It is important to note that this is only a suggested possibility, as proper mediation can only be established with the use of longitudinal data. This indirect relationship suggests that a young person may become a victim of violence as a result of the type of parental supervision they are receiving, which may lead to them to using drugs. All of these

findings are unexpected and surprising. However, there are several possible explanations for these findings. Unlike young people that live in low-crime areas, where the expectation is that the more supervision a young person receives, the less likely they are to develop criminal associations and later drug problems, perhaps the opposite is the case in high-crime areas. Although this is speculative, it is plausible that if a young person grows up in a 'bad area' their parents could be involved in criminal behaviour, resulting in encouragement on their part to get into that way of life. In this way, what is usually a positive relationship is negative in the sense that it actually could result in a life of crime. It should also be noted that a final explanation for these unusual findings could be that high levels of parental supervision are showing up as leading to increased levels of drug use, when in fact, there is already an established history of drug use and parents are simply trying to get it under control with high levels of supervision. Although there is often a generalised explanation of the more parental supervision young people receive, the less likely they are to associate with criminal friends, this research did not support this, but rather, supported the idea that it is probably dependent on the type of parental supervision young people are receiving or other factors that were not investigated in this research. This result is consistent with research undertaken by Unnever, et al., which highlights ineffective parental support and delinquent parental behaviour as causes of weakened bonds with their children, which have the doubly negative effect of decreasing constraints and increasing motivations for undesirable behaviour (2004).

The fourth direct effect observed was between Criminal Friends and Negative Personal Safety Attitudes. A weak and negative effect was displayed on NPSA. Since the relationship between criminal friends and negative personal safety attitudes is negative, this means that the more criminal friends a young person has the safer a young person

may feel. Fewer criminal friends leads to feeling less safe. A possible reason for young people in inner-city Dublin associating with criminal friends is that this association leads to them feeling safer. It is possible that if they did not associate with criminal friends, they might feel more vulnerable. These feelings could be linked to those feelings young people encounter in urban areas in the United States in terms of gangs, where one of the main reasons for joining the gang is to stay safe and feel protected (Esbensen, Deschenes & Winfree, 1999; NCPC, 2013).

The fifth direct effect observed was between Criminal Friends and Drug Use Behaviour, which displayed a positive and moderate direct effect. The relationship between criminal friends and drug use was positive and significant. Once the relationship with criminal friends has been established, young people then often start to use drugs. This finding is consistent with research stating that while time spent with activities such as sport is associated with decreased levels of smoking and drug use, time spent with peers is significantly and strongly associated with increased levels of delinquency, drug use, smoking, and drinking (Barnes et al., 2007). Though this research did not focus directly on delinquent peers, it is safe to assume that associations with all of the above and criminal friends would be even stronger based on empirical evidence that shows that there is a direct effect between having criminal friends and partaking in criminal behaviour, which may include taking drugs (Agnew, 2006; Matsueda & Anderson, 1998).

The sixth and seventh direct effects were observed between Drug Use Behaviour and two types of victimisation. There was not a significant link between Drug Use and Minor Victimization, however, Drug Use behaviour did positively predict both Violent Victimization and Property Victimization. In other words, the more young people use

drugs, the more likely they are to be victims of both property crime and violent crime. If a young person is engaging in a lifestyle that involves drug use, they are probably associating with some negative types of people, including those who may become desperate. This could lead to an increased likelihood of either being hurt or beaten up on a regular basis and being placed in situations where people are willing to steal from you in order to pay for drugs. Kirschbaum et al. found that large numbers of opiate users were suspected of committing property offences, and confirmed that at least in some cases, drug users commit property crimes in order to obtain more drugs (2013). This finding is also consistent with previous research in the area that has shown that young drug users are more likely to have been the victims of multiple types of violence and exhibit alcohol and drug use levels that increase with exposure to violence (Morojele & Brook, 2006; Vermeiren et al., 2003).

The eighth, ninth, and tenth direct effects were observed between Negative Personal Safety Attitudes and Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, and Violent Victimization. Young people may feel unsafe for a number of reasons and research has established that males and females experience feeling unsafe for different reasons (CSO, 2010; Garckija & Raižienė, 2013). However, there is a strong possibility that feeling unsafe predicts all types of victimisation due to repeat victimisation, as it is logical to assume that someone who has been victimised before, would feel less safe because of this. Furthermore, the fact that young people spend a large proportion of their day at school is an important factor to consider here as well. Young people do not have a choice as to whether or not they go to school. If they are being victimised at school or if they are participating in offending behaviour at school, it makes sense that this behaviour might be repeated as it is part and partial to the everyday existence of a young person and their lifestyle. Previous victimisation and repeat victimisation would

logically lead a young person to worry about being victimised again and would also make them feel unsafe. These results would be supported by repeat victimisation theories and related research in the area (Ellingworth et al., 1995; Pease, 1998).

These results are consistent with the theoretical predictions and generally, all conform to previous research findings. The notable exception is the pathway between Parental Supervision and Drug Use and Criminal Friends, which merits further attention, due to the conflicts posed with other research. For example, research undertaken in which increased levels of parental supervision were shown to impact adolescent substance abuse in a positive way, by reducing it (Kosterman et al., 2000; Sullivan et al., 2004) and which emphasized the importance of strong bonds and appropriate levels of parental supervision in decreasing the risk of developing criminal friendships (Jang, & Smith, 1997; Warr, 2005).

10.3.3 Implications, Limitations and Future Research

In terms of research implications, future research needs to be more specific and more refined in how parental supervision is measured. Perhaps the fact that parents might be criminals or drug users themselves needs to be controlled for, with additional attention paid to the fact that in certain areas, parents may see their children associating with criminal friends as a positive. Future research could also investigate the fact that despite parental supervision, there can still be drug use and involvement with criminal friends, when using a sample of young people. Moderation research might be helpful to determine if the relationship between parental supervision and criminal friends and parental supervision and drug use behaviour depends on another variable. A possible explanation is that the relationship between parental supervision and criminal friends

depends upon another factor, and that it is not simply a direct relationship between parental supervision and these factors but a relationship that is moderated by another factor. The relationship between the factors is likely to be due to another factor that was not considered in this research but that could be considered in future research.

In terms of policy implications, parental supervision of a negative nature, combined with hanging around criminal friends and using drugs results in young people living a lifestyle that makes them more vulnerable to becoming victims. Policies should become more focused on prevention, with a particular focus on reducing levels of criminal friends, which will in turn, lead to a reduction in drug use and delinquency among young people.

A limitation of this model was the way in which parental supervision was measured, which was perhaps limited. A more robust approach would have resulted in a better-quality assessment of the type of parental supervision that young people were experiencing and a more accurate picture of how the different types of parental supervision affect the various pathways, to increased criminal friends and drug use, for example.

10.4 Discussion of the Development of the YOBS and the Structural Equation Model of Offending

10.4.1 Development of the YOBS

In order to test the aims of the current study with regards to youth offending behaviour, three confirmatory factor models were investigated once again. Model D was a one-factor model, Model E was a correlated two-factor model, and Model F was an intercorrelated three-factor solution with property offending behaviour (two items),

theft offending behaviour (three items), and violent offending behaviour (three items) reflecting the three latent factors.

Model F emerged as the most accurate representation of the underlying latent structure of the Youth Offending Behaviour Scale (YOBS). This model featured a three-factor solution which was mutually correlated with property offending behaviour, theft offending behaviour, and violent offending behaviour reflecting the three latent factors. Based upon all fit indices for the obtained data, Model F represented an adequate approximation of the covariation matrix. The current research also examined the composite reliability of the measurement properties of the scale, which resulted in the YOBS exhibiting satisfactory composite reliability for each factor: Property, Theft, and Violent.

The determination of the adequacy of this model, using parameter estimates, revealed that all eight items displayed positive and statistically significant factor loadings on the three offending behaviour factors (property, theft and violent). In terms of correlations of the three factors of the YOBS, moderately-strong correlations were observed between the Property offending factor and both the Theft Offending factor, and Violent Offending factors, while a moderate association was observed between the Theft Offending and Violent Offending factors.

10.4.2 Development of the Structural Equation Model of Offending

An additional objective of the study was to understand the development of offending behaviour among young people. In order to investigate this, two theoretical models of offending were constructed: a direct model as described in Figure C and an indirect model as described in Figure D.

The indirect model of offending suggested that if a young person is a victim of crime before they offend, this is mediated by whether they use drugs or whether they have criminal friends. In other words, if someone becomes a victim of crime, in response to that, they might start to use drugs or start hanging out with criminal friends, and later start offending. In this case, it is not simply a case of being a victim that leads to offending, but rather, it is a case of being a victim, then developing a drug habit, and/or hanging out with criminal friends, and then becoming an offender. Even though this is a plausible explanation, in the case of this sample, it did not work. This explanation did not fit with what was seen in the data, so it was wrong. The direct model of offending did prove to be a plausible, working model for the relationship between victimisation and offending, which is actually a direct relationship. A direct relationship was established not only with victimisation experiences, but also, with drug use and with criminal friends. The whole theoretical model in its entirety was a good theoretical explanation as to why people engage in offending behaviour and the fact that the direct relationships are not mediated by other things is key. Being a victim appears to lead directly to offending behaviour, without apparent mediatory factors.

Further confirmation that the direct model of offending was the appropriate choice was provided by the results of the SEM analysis, which showed that the direct model of offending provided a statistically superior fit of the data, though both models produced CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR results within the appropriate ranges indicative of adequate model fit and both Chi-Square-to-df ratios were approximately 2:1.

The direct model of offending explained an impressive 39% of variance in Offending Behaviour, which was found to be statistically significant. Violent Victimization experiences had the strongest predictive effect on Offending Behaviour, followed by

Drug Use Behaviour, and Criminal Friends. These findings suggest that the factors described by the direct model of offending were appropriate distinguishing constructs in the development of this model, which offers an explanation of what leads young people to engage in offending behaviour.

As before, along with aiming to investigate the theoretical predictions with regards to the factors hypothesised to be vital in the development of youth offending behaviour, the investigation of the empirical model of offending was primarily interested in identifying the organisation of the factors used to measure offending by examining the direct pathways between Offending and Minor Victimization, Property Victimization, Violent Victimization, Drug Use, and Criminal Friends.

In terms of predictive effects, Violent Victimization experiences had the strongest predictive effect on Offending Behaviour followed by Drug Use Behaviour and Criminal Friends. These findings are supported by current research in the area, in all three cases, which will be detailed in the paragraphs below. In terms of violent victimisation being predictive of offending behaviour, these types of behaviour are the most closely related, as such, it makes sense that they would be the two that would be the most closely linked in keeping with the theory that the victim and offender are often one in the same. When looking at both victimisation and offending events in a predictive sense, the types often mirror each other. For example, when looking at all types of violent offending and victimisation, on average, all are experienced at approximately the same levels.

Direct effects were observed between Violent Victimization, Drug Use and Criminal Friends and Offending behaviour. Violent Victimization was the strongest predictor of Offending, followed by Drug Use and Criminal Friends. As noted earlier, Minor

Victimisation and Property Victimisation were not significant predictors of Offending behaviour. This makes sense as it would not really follow that a young person would turn to offending behaviour if their property were stolen or if they were being called names, but if they were constantly being threatened or found themselves in a lot of fights, they could turn to offending behaviour as either a coping mechanism or a means of protection. This finding is supported by previous research which has shown that the likelihood of violent victimisation increases with the seriousness of offending. In fact, Huizinga and Jakob-Chien (1998) found that only 12% of non-offenders were violently victimised, compared to 49% of serious violent offenders. It is also supported by the Victim Support (2007) findings highlighting three main direct pathways between violent victimisation and offending including: revenge on the perpetrator, third party revenge due to perpetrator revenge being deemed too risky, and involvement with violent peers as a means of protection.

Drug use as a predictor of Offending behaviour has been well established in the research literature. Research has linked drinking and drug use to increased antisocial behaviour and is also linked to increases in aggressive and violent behaviour, (Lynskey & Hall, 2000; Mrug & Windle, 2009). Simply being on drugs can make some people act in a violent fashion, which can lead to a whole host of problems. However, constant drug use leads to associating with individuals who are involved in criminal activity and may also lead to individuals having to get involved in crime to pay for more drugs.

Having Criminal Friends as a predictor of Offending behaviour has been a feature of criminological research studies for decades (Chapple, Vaske, & Worthen, 2014; Elliott & Menard, 1996; Haynie, 2002; Haynie & Osgood, 2005; Jensen, 1972; Krohn, 1974;

Matsueda and Anderson, 1998; Matsueda & Heimer, 1987). The lifestyles of young people who hang out with criminal friends is conducive to partaking in delinquent behaviour. If a young person is constantly hanging out with other young people who are always in trouble and causing trouble, it makes sense that there is a strong likelihood that they will follow in their footsteps. Alternatively, if a young person is hanging out with their sports team, is involved with after-school activities, or is in other clubs, it is clear that their likelihood of both having criminal friends and engaging in offending behaviour will be quite low.

10.4.3 Implications, Limitations and Future Research

Violent Victimization, Drug Use and Criminal Friends were all identified as being important in the prediction of Offending behaviour. The implications for this finding are that when the pathways from victimisation to offending are being considered, it is important to highlight the fact that it is violent victimisation that has an effect on offending, not minor victimisation or property victimisation. In other words, if the goal is to understand the pathways between being a victim and being an offender, it seems that minor victimisation experiences do not confer any risk of becoming an offender. Similarly, property victimisation does not confer any of this type of risk. However, having been a victim of a violent offence does predict offending behaviour. Knowing what predicts offending behaviour gives both policymakers and practitioners the knowledge of both where and how to intervene.

Those involved with youth work, who are trying to reduce offending amongst young people, should take a hard look at drug use and try to get young people off drugs and keep them off. This research has empirically demonstrated that there is a positive, quite

robust (moderate) relationship between drug use and offending, which shows that if drug use can be reduced within the sample, the likelihood of engagement in criminal behaviour will decrease dramatically. It should be noted that a limitation of the current research is its cross-sectional design, with no temporal ordering, which makes it impossible to determine the direction of effects. As mentioned previously, it has been proven that drug use can increase offending behaviour. Therefore, it is also possible that drug use and offending behaviour can have a reciprocal relationship. In other words, offending behaviour may also cause drug use. The methodological design of this current study did not allow for this type of assessment. However, this is something that should be considered in future research, as all links between drug use and offending have important implications for the creation of youth policies in the future. Offending behaviour and crime are very costly both in terms of victims, punishment of offenders, and the running of the judicial system. If there is a shift to the institutionalising of programmes that prevent drug use in the first place, and get people off drugs in the second, money will be saved across the board in the long run.

This research also empirically demonstrated that there is a positive, moderate relationship between having criminal friends and offending, which shows that if having criminal friends can be reduced within the sample, the likelihood of engagement in criminal behaviour will decrease dramatically. As such, young people having criminal friends has been firmly established as another risk factor for offending behaviour. If a young person comes in contact with youth workers and is known to associate with criminal friends, more should be done to establish how many of his/her friends are associated with crime and to create possible solutions to get the young person out of the situation and away from criminal friends. If youth workers could be educated and

trained in ways to facilitate youth detachment from these relationships, the possibilities for decreasing criminal friends and the likelihood of offending will both increase.

Finally, a good model of offending behaviour was established in this research. However, as with all models, it could not explain everything. Future research should take these results and build upon them, in order to develop more intricate models that could possibly explain more of what is happening in the realm of youth victimisation and offending.

Considering limitations further, the way in which drug use was measured in this study was possibly too robust, in that it included smoking and alcohol use. A more streamlined approach would have resulted in a better-quality assessment of the type of drugs that are problematic in assessing offending behaviour and a more accurate picture of how different types of drug use might affect the pathway to offending behaviour. Furthermore, a greater consideration of some of the theoretical models considered (in attempting to explain offending behaviour) and the empirical bases for these could have been explored in more detail. Adolescent risk taking, sensation seeking and the roles of group activity in offending are areas that were not considered in the thesis but could provide valuable insight into offending behaviour. As such, it would be important to include these themes in any future research.

10.5 Discussion of the Qualitative Research Findings: Focus Groups

10.5.1 Discussion of Findings

The qualitative element of this project offered in-depth insight into the daily lives of young girls living in inner-city Dublin and provided insight into some of the gender

issues surrounding youth victimisation and offending. Not only were issues specific to young females discussed in detail, insight into some of the differences between experiences based on gender were explored. Several interesting themes emerged from the focus groups, including girls' views on: Offending, Free Time Activities, Adults, Safety, Attitudes toward the Gardaí, and Differences between Girls and Boys today.

Overall, the qualitative research findings provided additional support to the quantitative findings and the theory and literature that was used to explain those findings. In terms of victimisation experiences, girls mentioned feeling more protected from victimisation at all-girls schools. This could be due to another finding, which was mentioned repeatedly, that both girls and boys tend to 'show-off' in front of one another. Showing-off could involve problematic behaviours such as vandalism, theft, teasing, and name calling. The findings also revealed that crime and victimisation were a constant occurrence in the areas in which the girls lived, with many of them mentioning robberies and physical assaults occurring in their areas on a regular basis. On an individual level, quiet and shy types were identified as being more vulnerable to victimisation.

Strong opinions were expressed about gender. It was clear that the vast majority of girls felt that they were equal to boys. However, several gender stereotypes were also expressed. For example, even though physical violence was mentioned as something that is occurring more and more often amongst girls, it was also pointed out that a big difference between boys and girls was that girls do not tend to use weapons, where boys would be open to using weapons. It is also still considered a 'bigger deal' for girls to be arrested than boys. Alcohol was repeatedly mentioned as adding to the problem of violent behaviour for both boys and girls. This is supported by similar

research in the area (Vermeiren et al., 2003; Lynskey & Hall, 2000; Mrug & Windle, 2009).

Along with gender differences, age differences and maturity were also mentioned as explanations as to who gets into trouble. Many girls mentioned growing up and now being too mature to get into trouble with drinking, drug use, and bad behaviour, even though they use to partake in all three when they were younger. They also mentioned attention-seeking as a major explanation as to why boys and girls get into trouble. This was not a surprising finding. ‘Group mentality’ was something that was mentioned specifically in the context of girls’ bad behaviour. Interestingly, this type of behaviour was explained as girls acting like boys when they are in groups. Again, where an issue might not arise with just one girl or one boy walking down the street, a situation can escalate quite quickly into a confrontation when groups of girls and boys are together.

A reassuring finding was that many girls not only felt safe in their particular school but that they felt as though their particular group was a ‘good group’ and that they did not have particularly high levels of victimisation or offending at school. Differences in where they experienced trouble most were clear, however, with most girls reporting more problems while ‘out in town’ or around their homes, than in their school. This particular finding raises many concerns, as even though young people spend the majority of their day time in the school environment, many of their free-time hours are spent away from school where problem behaviour tends to flourish and problem people tend to hang out. This finding supports the argument for more after-school activities and youth clubs. Time and time again, boredom and having nowhere to go were mentioned as reasons why young people get into trouble. It is true that some youth will

still fall through the cracks, no matter how many youth activities and clubs are organised for them. However, there is a strong argument for and evidence to support increased funding for both youth activities and youth centres.

10.5.2 Implications

These findings have established that many problems young people face are due to their lifestyles and the fact that they are in fact young and immature. These findings have implications for how youth lifestyles can be supported in a more effective way through the provision of accessible youth centres and youth activities. Many of the existing youth centres close too early at night and many youth activities are overly focused on team sports and more traditional after-school activities. This is not to say that these activities are not hugely important and beneficial to keeping young people out of trouble. The problem is that again, only some youth will partake in these activities, leaving the others to fall through the cracks. There should be more focus on activities that are more universally available to young people and pro-social. Excellent examples of this are the Midnight Basketball and the First Tee programmes that are very popular in the United States, and other organised after-school programme offering activities such as homework help, baking and swimming.

Organised after-school activities not only keep young people out of trouble, they also help working parents figure out what to do about those troublesome hours between three and six in the afternoon. With more households having both parents working outside the home, it is becoming even more important to figure out what should be done with after-school free time. Though some funding would be necessary, many successful programmes are run by volunteers. Even offering the programmes a few days a week would be a huge help to everyone. Some students do not have someone at

home who can help them with their homework or who can teach them how to bake, for example.

The success of adult night-classes in Ireland shows that we do have the facilities and organisation necessary to create effective, financially feasible programmes for youth. However, start-ups of these programmes will require time, effort, and government funding. The challenge will be to find a balance between focusing on funded programmes that are essential as primary preventive interventions and funded programmes that are targeted to deal with specific evidence-based risks and outcomes. Both types of programmes are important and necessary to the future success of crime and drug-use reduction initiatives and victim protection programmes. More research is needed in order to awaken the government to the realisation of the importance of getting this funding dyad correct. At the moment, government funding is too-heavily focused on late interventions such as dealing with early school leavers and issuing penal responses. If this focus could swing toward early intervention and preventative measures, focusing on reducing offending behaviour and drug use at the very early stages, and providing support for children/youth, families, and communities, there would be positive cost implications for the government and positive social outcomes for society as a whole.

10.5.3 Limitations and Future Research

The most obvious limitation to this element of the research was the fact that the focus groups were only conducted with girls. It would have been very interesting to compare and contrast the findings directly by gender. However, as mentioned before, this was not feasible for many reasons, namely the lack of eagerness of boys to participate, and the uncertainty around the truthfulness of boys, in terms of victimisation in particular,

due to possible issues around appearing weak in front of other boys. It is also generally accepted that teenage girls are more open to talking than boys.

Similar to the above, it would have also been interesting to conduct focus groups with Principals, teachers, and youth workers in these areas. Due to time constraints, this was not possible. It was also felt that staff had given up a lot of time and had put in a lot of effort to allow the surveys and focus groups of their students to take place in their respective schools and youth work centres. Asking staff to participate in and organise yet another research activity felt overly burdensome.

Conducting focus groups have their own limitations. Obviously, the researcher is at the centre of each session and is ultimately responsible for how the discussion flows and for making sure all topics were covered. Though the schedule of topics was kept at hand at all times and by and large every focus group covered the same material, there were some groups who simply did not participate as much and who did not offer a large amount of insight into the topics being discussed. This is problematic because the range of findings is limited to fewer individuals. Even though quotations were gathered from each group, ultimately, some were just more interesting than others, which unfortunately cannot be avoided. Perhaps, if more time was allocated to each focus group, the girls would have become more comfortable and might have divulged more or at the very least might have talked more. Thankfully, there were only a handful of girls who did not say much, but in the future it would be important to learn more sophisticated techniques for dealing with quiet participants and maintaining comfort levels for all participants.

10.6 Theoretical Implications of the Research Findings

Several theories were critically reviewed in order to aid in the discovery of which theory would be most helpful in explaining youth victimisation and offending. Though each of the theories made contributions to this project, social control theory, lifestyle theory, and routine activities theory evolved as they key theories in this piece of research. These findings have theoretical implications in terms of how theory is used to explain youth victimisation and offending. This thesis has shown that several theories working together offer the best explanations for youth victimisation and offending. Though some theories explain more and are more relevant, there is not one theory that can explain all of these factors effectively. Though youth victimisation and offending are closely linked, there are too many factors involved in attempts to explain them, making it difficult for one theory to capture the whole experience. The theoretical focus, in this regard, should shift away from trying to find a catch-all theory. As such, these findings support the developmental victimology approach. However, it should also be noted that this research lends itself to the theoretical approach provided by the left realist square of crime, in that the best understanding of crime comes from investigating the interrelationships between the victim, the offender, the state and its agencies, and informal methods of social control.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending in inner-city Dublin and has identified the frequency, type, and main dynamics of these youth experiences. The study also set out to develop an understanding of what factors predict victimisation experiences and offending behaviour among youth and to determine what correlations exist between victims and offenders, through answering the following research questions:

- a) What relevant factors lead to victimisation and offending behaviour?
- b) What relationships exist between victimisation experiences and offending behaviour?
- c) Which routine activities and lifestyle choices have a significant impact on victimisation and offending?
- d) What role does parental supervision play in determining youth victimisation and offending risk?
- e) What role does gender play in victimisation and offending?

This chapter will begin with a review of the thesis chapters which will be discussed in terms of the various elements of the research that were undertaken in order to establish the empirical findings. The chapter will then move on to detailing the theoretical implications, as well as the methodological, policy and practice recommendations for future research. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations, strengths, and future research directions, and finally, by detailing the research contribution that this project has made to the discipline as a whole.

11.2 Elements of the Research Performed to Establish the Empirical Findings

11.2.1 The Review of the Literature

The first element of this project involved a review of the literature pertaining to victimology and victim surveys. A brief description of the historical emergence of victimology was also provided in order to give context to the project as a whole, as there have not been any in-depth youth victimological studies performed in Ireland to date. Since a victim survey was the chosen tool for the quantification of victimisation and offending rates, the reasons for and against their use were also explored. Reasons for using this type of survey included the ability to: provide a more accurate assessment of victimisation rates, investigate attitudes to and the consequences of crime, and capture victimisations that are not reported, and also, those that individuals are reluctant to talk about. On the other hand, reasons against using victim surveys included: methodological difficulties, problems due to reliance on participant memory recall, and the survey's inability to precisely measure the seriousness of incidents.

In order to establish the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending, a thorough review of seminal works in the area was conducted first, in order to determine existing rates and to predict what might be found in the current research. One of the main findings coming out of this review was that rates of youth victimisation are high and that young people are much more vulnerable to becoming victims than adults. As can be seen in the summary of victimisation incidents provided in Section 10.2.1, this research provided further support for this finding. Another finding emerging from the review of relevant research was that most perpetrators of crimes are already known to the victim. This is often the case with young people, who would spend a large proportion of their time at school, amongst peers. The fact that young people have very

little control over where they spend their time and who they spend their time with also results in the majority of youth victimisation occurring at or after school, when young people are in the company of others from school or their local areas. Another finding emerging from the review of seminal research was that boys are more likely to be victimised than girls. This finding was mirrored in this project, with males receiving higher scores for all types of victimisation. However, even though males consistently experienced more types of victimisation and took part in more offending behaviours, the findings established that there was a minimal difference between the male and female experiences for this age group. Finally, one of the most interesting findings to emerge from the literature review was that small numbers of youth are responsible for the majority of serious offences, and also experience the most serious forms of victimisation, commonly experiencing repeat victimisation as well. This was also found in the current study, where the violent experiences were the most serious and a relatively high proportion of the sample reported these types of incidents.

Along with the above mentioned findings and others, the literature review also unveiled important themes that were particularly relevant to the establishment of the nature and extent of victimisation and offending. These themes included repeat victimisation, the effects of drugs and alcohol on youth experiences, and gender differences in youth experiences.

11.2.2 The Creation of the Theoretical Framework

The theories informing this research included: lifestyle theory, social control theory, rational choice theory, routine activities theory, situational crime prevention, and finally, general strain theory. Each of these theories were critically reviewed with an

eye to discovering which theory would be most helpful in explaining youth victimisation and offending. Though each of these theories made contributions to this project, social control theory, lifestyle theory, and routine activities theory were key, and an approach was adopted which supported the developmental victimology perspective.

11.3 Discovery of the Empirical Findings

This research employed a multi-method approach consisting of a youth victim survey, structural equation modelling techniques, and focus groups. Each of these methods uncovered different findings. The survey provided the demographic information, frequency, and differences amongst groups for victimisation and offending incidents, and a clearer picture of youth experiences. The structural equation models uncovered the factors that lead to both victimisation and offending and highlighted all of the predictive effects. Finally, the focus groups gave a glimpse into the lives of girls living in inner-city Dublin. All three of these methods and the aforementioned theories have allowed for an accurate picture of the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending to be made, while addressing all of the research questions. In the following sections, the empirical findings will be categorically summarised accordingly.

11.3.1 Factors Leading to Victimisation and Offending

The findings showed that violent victimisation, drug use, and associations with criminal friends were all predictors of offending behaviour. Meanwhile, drug use was found to predict property victimisation and violent victimisation but did not predict minor victimisation, while negative personal safety attitudes predicted minor victimisation,

property victimisation, and violent victimisation. Finally, parental supervision had an indirect effect on violent victimisation via drug use.

11.3.2 Relationships between Victimisation Experiences and Offending Behaviour

The link between victimisation and offending was firmly established by empirical research (Chen, 2009; Esbensen & Huizinga, 1991; Fagan & Mazerolle, 2011; Jennings, Piquero, & Reingle, 2012; Maldonado-Molina, et al., 2010; Shaffer & Ruback, 2002; Zhang, Welte, & Wieczorek, 2001). Furthermore, the structural equation model of offending behaviour established a strong link between victimisation experiences and offending behaviour by showing that violent victimisation acts as a strong predictor of offending.

11.3.3 Impact of Routine Activities, Lifestyles, Parental Supervision, and Gender

The structural equation model of victimisation provided empirical evidence to show the impact of parental supervision on both drug use and associations with criminal friends. This thesis has also made it clear that all three of these factors are extremely important in determining both youth victimisation and offending risk, as they are key components in the determination of youth lifestyles. Namely, young people having criminal friends leads to drug use and fewer negative personal safety attitudes (feeling safer). On the other hand, parental supervision predicts both drug use and criminal friends, which was very surprising. Since the sample consisted of young people, the effects of drugs and alcohol were strong. In terms of the effects of gender, differences were established in the literature between how males and females interact during confrontations with members of their own sex, with males tending to be more physical and females tending to resort to name calling and insults. However, the quantitative findings established by

this research found that differences between genders were small, though this was contradicted by the qualitative findings.

11.4 Recommendations for Future Research

11.4.1 General Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis has presented a large amount of research, which has provided a strong knowledge base for exploring youth victimisation. However, the fact remains that despite increases in Irish bullying research, there has yet to be a large scale study focusing specifically on youth victimisation in Ireland. Furthermore, statistics on youth offending amongst Irish youth are still lacking.

There are several factors that could be considered in future research to guarantee a more robust picture of the youth victimisation experience in Ireland. More areas of Dublin and other cities could be explored, rural locations could be examined, and nation-wide or urban versus rural comparisons could be made, for example. Despite the fact that all of the participants in this study attended schools and youth reach centres in inner-city Dublin, the greater areas within the city of Dublin do differ, and would provide an interesting comparison. Students and their backgrounds also differ which has a huge effect on their individual lifestyles. For example, a young person who has to walk half an hour to school or take a public bus to school will obviously have more opportunities for victimisation than a young person who is dropped off by a guardian every day, simply as a function of this element of their lifestyle. This and other elements of youth lifestyle could be explored further. For example, key questions might include: what resources are available in the given area, how often do the sample use them, and how many of the sample are known to have problematic parents.

Further investigation of the self-reported delinquency of peers is also merited. Though this survey did ask young people if they had criminal friends and how many of their friends engaged in delinquent behaviour, not much more was known about this group. Since criminal friends was such a strong indicator of both victimisation and offending, it makes sense that finding more information about this particular group would be helpful in determining overall rates.

Future research would also benefit from determining the significance of community disadvantage in more detail. This might take place through the evaluation of other measures of community characteristics, such as levels of social control in the area, community disorder levels, availability of community leisure activities, and overall community satisfaction. Of particular interest would be evaluating the various levels of social control, for example, control in the form of Garda, community groups, neighbours, and family, both immediate and extended.

The condoning of both criminal and delinquent acts is another area of potential interest. This research showed a clear distinction between acts such as robbery and under-age drinking. It is safe to assume that there would be further differentiation between behaviour that is deemed acceptable and unacceptable amongst different areas and in different age groups. Social class would come into this evaluation as well.

Similarly, the simultaneous gathering of data from teachers and parents would also be helpful. In order to obtain the whole picture of the youth experience, it simply is not enough to question only the young people themselves. Obviously, some students will not readily admit to having problems with other students, problems with school or after school, or problems at home, in a survey. Granted, these same students might not admit to these things to their loved ones either. However, covering all the bases in an

attempt to gather the clearest possible picture of what is happening in young peoples' lives would be best practice. Through gathering data from both teachers and parents, the youth experience in the two locations in which they spend the vast majority of their time would be covered thoroughly.

The area that cannot be covered by teachers and parents is free time with friends. This is why more exhaustive questioning of young people in terms of not only who they spend their free time with, but also, how they spend their free time would provide useful data. The survey used in this research did cover these areas, but again, more depth of questioning would have led to better results.

11.4.2 Methodological Recommendations for Future Research

There are many methodological issues that must be tackled in this field if there is to be any confidence in the conclusions drawn from existing research and future research. The efficacy of self-report data is clearly affected by methodological differences in how questions are phrased, how constructs are defined, and which timeframe of measurement is used. How young people, adults, and researchers perceive bullying and victimisation can also vary greatly, which suggests that research questions, constructs, and timeframes must be as specific as possible.

One of the issues with research on youth victimisation that has become readily apparent over the course of this project is the difficulties that are brought about by the use of varying terminology, classifications, age groups, other differences amongst studies, and research designs. Sabri et al. (2013) have provided an exhaustive look at the literature concerning the various contexts in which adolescents are exposed to violence and have highlighted problems associated with both the lack of consistency in operational

definitions and the difficulties arising from the use of popular cross-sectional research designs. The cross-sectional design of this research has already been highlighted as being problematic in the quest for the determination of causal relationships between victimisation and offending, but longitudinal research can suffer from the same problem. As Reijntjes et al. (2010) discovered in their research, while longitudinal data can allow for clarification as to whether there is a tendency for victimisation to precede the onset of externalizing problems, this type of data does not allow for compelling conclusions with regard to causal relationships. All of these issues should be taken into account when deciding upon the design of youth crime research, to avoid as many associated pitfalls as possible, as these make the jobs of researchers much more difficult.

Another problem unique to youth victimisation research is that much of the research and discussion around the issue is in terms of bullying. Though this research is not without merit, in some ways, it minimizes the plight of youth victims through separating them from the adult experience in a way that both appears trivial, and is also handled in a trivial manner by authorities. Youth can be physically assaulted and be classified only as a victim of bullying that has turned violent. There are two approaches to dealing with the problem. Firstly, bullying could be treated with the seriousness it deserves, or secondly, youth could be considered victims in the same sense that adults are considered victims, particularly when violence is involved.

The normalisation of instruments across the various development levels and age groups would be hugely beneficial. It is clear that the various age groups experience different types of bullying/victimisation. Age-specific instruments need to be developed and validated to reflect this. The norming of instruments to reflect specific ages and

development levels, in particular contexts, is needed in order to allow for the extrapolation of findings across the field.

The fragmentation of the area is linked to problems with definitional issues and cut-off points in determining when a young person should be considered a bully/offender or victim. It is important to distinguish between those young people who are victimised and those who victimise, for example 1-2 times versus more than 6 times, in a given time period. Soldberg and Olweus (2003) have been successful in their attempts to make sure that victimisation and bullying (face-to-face in particular) are operationalised as patterns of behaviour and are more clearly defined within research. They highlight the appropriate cut-off period as “two to three times a month” but were also keen to point out that even those who did not meet this criteria were still worse off than those who did not experience or perpetrate victimisation at all. More research is needed in order to establish these definitional and cut-off issues further.

11.4.3 Policy Recommendations for Future Research

Policies concerning youth need to take into account what it actually means to be young and how youth experiences differ from those of adults. There are differences in opinion concerning youth and adult experiences which can be attributed to the tendency to underestimate youth victimisation in terms of rates, repercussions, and levels of seriousness. For example, should the victimisation experiences of young people be deemed less serious because they are not always reported to the police, or might not result in as large of a monetary loss? Or what if what happens to young people is not even considered a crime? Take incidents of fighting on the school grounds or horseplay that ends with someone getting hurt. These incidents are not considered

criminal, but they are often just as serious, relatively speaking. The key is to take the incidents into consideration in a relative matter. For example, young people do not have as many material things as adults, so small things could have more worth if they are stolen, and when the majority of a young person's time is spent in an environment that they cannot easily change, scraps in the schoolyard can end up being more serious than a once-off bar fight. The above mentioned scenarios shed some light on some of the difficulties that youth victims face. Not only do they have to deal with issues such as being at a higher risk of victimisation, coupled with less ways to cope with this, they also have to learn how to manage these difficulties within a system that tends to underestimate the seriousness of their experiences. Policies on victimisation, bullying, and offending need to take the individualized situation of being a young person into account. Only if this is taken into account and the whole experience of being young (and powerless in some situations) is properly considered can appropriate youth policies be made that could assist young people in getting through what can be a very difficult phase of life.

There is evidence to support keeping young people in the school system in order to keep them out of trouble. Firmer government policies should be in place to ensure that not only young people stay in school, but also, that they are given the necessary resources to succeed. There are obvious benefits to this outside of delinquency prevention, but absence of educational goals, poor academic performance and lack of positive bonds with teachers have all been shown to increase delinquency levels (Agnew, 2005; Cao et al., 2004; Sprague et al., 2001). These findings alone should be enough to merit a more intense focus on using education as a means to breaking the cycle of delinquency and offending among Irish youth.

A multiple factor approach to the design of community-wide prevention programmes has been suggested by experts, so that multiple protective and risk factors can be dealt with simultaneously (Garbarino, Bradshaw, & Vorrasi, 2002; Herrenkohl, Huang, Kosterman, Hawkins, & Catalano, 2001). This approach seems to make sense in the Irish context. The Celtic Tiger years led this country down a road of excess and detachment amongst organisations that never should have happened. Though steps have been made in the right direction, more thought should go into which organisations should work together to fight the youth crime issue, and also, which organisations are duplicating efforts and should join forces and resources.

A strong sense of community involvement is also necessary in the fight against youth crime and violence. Many experts in the field agree that community commitment is necessary for youth crime and violence prevention programmes to be effective (Katzmann, 2002; Randall, Swenson, & Henggeler, 1999). Policies should push for stronger community involvement in all youth projects, as this will lead to more commitment and higher levels of success. Community partnerships are also key. Evidence supporting the necessity of community partnerships has been cited in previous research (Fagan, 2002; Katzmann, 2002; Kelley, 2003). These partnerships strengthen community efforts and go a long way to ensure that long-term prevention measures will last.

Finally, more evidence-based research is needed in order to support risk-focused prevention measures and resilience programmes. Though difficulties involved in linking specific risk factors to causal effects have been noted in previous research (Bushway, et al., 2013; Krohn, et al., 2014; Murray, Farrington & Eisner, 2009),

Farrington and Painter have highlighted how risk-focused prevention measures can be simplified:

Identify the key risk factors for offending and implement prevention programmes to tackle them. This idea avoids the difficult question of which risk factors have causal effects. The assumption is that if all modifiable risk factors are targeted, the intervention programme will be effective because at least some of the risk factors will be causes. (2004, p. 57).

Approaching prevention measures focused on risk in this manner in Ireland would be advantageous as the list of known risk factors provided in *Tackling the Underlying Causes of Crime* (National Crime Council, 2002), for example, is quite long. In this document, Family Background/Parenting, Individual Factors, Neighbourhood and Community Factors, Academic Factors, and Socio-Economic Deprivation are all identified as risk factors. If evidence-based interventions are focused on the identification and targeting of all risk factors in an area, as Farrington and Painter suggest, the likelihood of the success of these programmes would be greatly increased. Furthermore, as Hawkins (2010) has noted “abuse, neglect, poverty, and violence threaten the development and behaviour of many youth, yet some remain resilient” (p. 10). More evidence-based research advocating risk/resilience programmes would also assist in the determination of why some youth remain resilient despite the odds that are stacked against them, while others do not.

11.5 Limitations, Strengths and Future Research Directions

11.5.1 Limitations

In addition to the limitations that were previously discussed as part of Chapter 10, five limitations that applied to the entire project are detailed below. The first limitation of this research concerned sample and sample size. Originally, the research design

involved using a nationwide sample. However, after much consideration and consultation with experts, it was decided that even though a nationwide sample could be obtained, it would not be advisable. This was due to the fact that, for a single researcher on a small budget, it would be very difficult to obtain a representative sample at a national level. A larger sample would also have been preferable to a sample of 421. However, it should be noted that this was relatively large for a localised study, was sufficient for the purposes of this study, and was adequate for the investigation of the properties of the YVES and the YOBS, using confirmatory factor analysis procedures.

The second limitation of this research involved the fact that the survey used in this study did not cover online victimisation, cyber-bullying, or text bullying. The reason for this was that the survey used in this research was conducted in 2005. Though many teenagers would have had mobile phones at that stage, the popularity of smart phones began in later years. Today, with many young people owning smart phones and having Wi-Fi in their homes, cyber-bullying and text bullying have become a common occurrence and problem. Future research should deal with this specific type of victimisation, along with more traditional types of victimisation, as it is easy to see that the two may easily overlap.

The third limitation of this study had to do with the lack of use of an established scale. Though one of the many strengths of this project is that a new scale has been created as part of the project, the use of an existing scale as an additional element of the research would have led to ease of comparison with other research projects and ease of duplication. Future research might consider using a combination of scales for the above reason.

The fourth limitation involved the implications of studying a population in a place rather than the context itself. It would have been beneficial to explore the minutiae of the conditions and circumstances of those living in the inner-city (Dublin 1, 2, 7 and 8). Furthermore, it would have been particularly insightful to delve further into how the social and spatial formations of settings have influenced the nature of crime in this particular urban context. However, the use of a survey, a vital method to the obtainment of more detailed knowledge of both victimisation and offending in the area, precluded a more in-depth contextual analysis. Future research should consider using a more in-depth qualitative approach involving an ethnographic or case-study design in order to explore the context issue further.

The final limitation of the overall study was that though all relevant factors were explored, some were not investigated thoroughly enough. For example, though parental supervision was covered in depth in this research, family attachment was not considered. Attachment to family has been shown to be a strong indicator in research focusing on whether or not young people choose delinquent lifestyles and criminal behaviour. Similarly, though drug use was covered in the survey, the way in which it was covered could have been scrutinised further and applied in a more robust fashion.

Future research should address all of these limitations.

11.5.2 Strengths

This research project had a number of significant strengths. Accessing a sample that contained both secondary students and Youthreach centre attendees in inner-city Dublin offered a unique approach to capturing as many young people living in the given area as possible. As stated previously, there have not been any large-scale or localised,

area-based victimisation studies performed in Dublin. The research that has been performed has either focused on a broad-range of ages, which happened to include some under-18s, or has been solely focused on bullying. As such, this research project provides an original contribution to the prevailing research literature in this area.

Further strength to the project was obtained through the use of latent variable modelling procedures. These procedures allowed for the relationships between the latent and observed variables within the various structural equation models to be empirically tested. Simpler statistical analysis would not have allowed this level of investigation to take place.

Using a multi-method approach also strengthened this research project. In some ways, this project can be seen as three individual projects that each offered a different angle on the experiences of young people. Each of these angles were necessary to get an overall picture of what young people in inner-city Dublin are experiencing. This project could have left out the qualitative element or could have analysed the data differently. However, this would have weakened the overall project and could possibly have shown only one side of youth victimisation and offending, which would not have been sufficient. Through the incorporation of the three elements of this project, the nature and extent of youth victimisation and offending were covered in great depth, issues that directly affect female youth were considered at an intricate level, and some of the factors that lead victimisation and offending to occur were firmly established.

11.5.3 Future Research Directions

Further validation studies of the YVES and YOBS would be necessary to test whether or not the factor structure of the measures used in this research would remain the same

and consistent, amongst differing groups. Future research would need to use an assortment of population groups before any definitive deductions about the YVES and the YOBS could be made in terms of construct validity. In order to make improvements on the structural equation models that were used in this research, future research projects would also need to create duplicate designs and test them with larger samples. Once the designs were tested in this manner, the reliability of the structural equation models could be improved. A more reliable model is always a better model.

It is clear that more needs to be done in terms of determining both youth victimisation and youth offending risks and patterns in Ireland. One step in the right direction would be for the Central Statistics Office to include under 16 year olds in their Quarterly National Household Surveys, while taking into account more of the individual and community factors discussed in this research through drawing on a wider range of victimological and criminological theories. Further consultancy with academics and practitioners specialising in youth would also be hugely beneficial, as there is a sense that the consultation at present is limited.

Finally, the findings of this study have implications for prevention programmes for addressing victimisation among Irish youth. The findings suggest that targeted prevention programmes need to be developed, particularly for those who have been identified in this research as most at risk for victimisation; namely, young people who have criminal friends, use drugs, have been victimised previously and feel unsafe, and/or are in receipt of inadequate parental supervision.

11.6 Research Contribution

This research project has contributed to the existing literature in several significant ways. A number of contributions to the literature on youth victimisation and offending were achieved through the use of both multivariate statistical analysis and latent variable modelling techniques. Confirmatory factor analysis procedures facilitated the identification of possible factors that impact on models that were both theoretically consistent and practically plausible. The creation of models of both victimisation and offending resulted in the development of a measure of these events that has been validated and is now ready to be used in future research efforts. Though there are several measures of both victimisation and offending available to researchers already, this new measure is concise, easy to use, and short enough to hold young people's attention. Contributing a valid and reliable measure to the fields of criminology and victimology is a valuable contribution to these fields of study.

The comprehensive assessment of the theoretical predictions of what might lead to youth experiencing victimisation incidents and youth partaking in offending behaviour was achieved by means of applying techniques unique to structural equation modelling. This study provided findings which strongly supported the theories that youth victims and offenders are often one in the same, that violent victimisation leads to offending, and that in some cases offending can lead to victimisation. The direct effects of drug use, and having criminal friends on taking part in offending behaviour were also established. Greater understanding of how significant these factors are to the development of offending behaviour could lead to further development of more focused, effective, and efficient methods of youth offending intervention programmes.

This research has used reliable quantitative and qualitative findings to paint a clear picture of youth experiences in inner-city Dublin. In doing so, risk factors have been established for both victimisation and offending and associations between many elements of youth lifestyles have been shown to further predict risks. There are several approaches that could have been taken to achieve these results. However, this thesis pursued this aim through employing advanced multivariate statistical procedures that were analysed at a complex level, which resulted in a thorough and arduous investigation of youth victimisation and offending.

In conclusion, this thesis has succeeded in accomplishing its aims and objectives and has provided advances in the study of youth victimisation and offending that provide a range of possibilities for future research opportunities in the area.

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Appendix A: Irish Youth Victimization Survey Questionnaire

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

IRISH YOUTH VICTIMISATION SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

- ◆ If you do not understand any of the questions or if you need help, please raise your hand, and I will come over to your desk and help you.

- ◆ Please answer honestly and remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

- ◆ This survey is completely confidential. All information that you give will remain completely private.

- ◆ Attached to the back of the questionnaire is a list of useful helplines and organisations in Ireland. These services are free and were created to help young people. Please tear this page off the questionnaire and take it away with you.

THANK YOU FOR BOTH YOUR TIME AND YOUR HELP.

Instructions

* Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes and fill in the blanks.

- Q1.** Are you: Male Female
- Q2.** Please list your *Age* here: _____
- Q3.** Which of the following best describes your background? **Please tick (✓) one box.**
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African origin | <input type="checkbox"/> East European origin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |
- Q4.** Please list the area where you are currently living and your postcode:
- Area:** _____ **Postcode:** _____
- Q5.** What type of home do you live in? **Please tick (✓) one box.**
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Flat. | <input type="checkbox"/> Council House. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Privately Owned Flat/Apartment. | <input type="checkbox"/> Privately Owned House. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caravan. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
- Q6.** Who lives in your home with you? **Please tick (✓) Yes or No and fill in the blank if other adults live in your home.**
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Brother(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Sister(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |
- Q7.** Are the adults living with you in paid employment?
- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Two or more adults</i> are in paid employment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>One adult</i> is in paid employment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No adult</i> living with me is in paid employment. |
- Q8.** Please briefly describe the jobs of those adults living in your home:
- 1st Adult: _____
- 2nd Adult: _____
- Q9.** How many brothers do you have? _____
- Do you attend school with an older brother? Yes No
- Q10.** How many sisters do you have? _____
- Do you attend school with an older brother? Yes No

Instructions**IF YOU LEFT ALL OF Q14 BLANK, PLEASE SKIP TO Q21 NOW.**

Q15. Of all the experiences mentioned in **Question 14**, please list **the one that bothered you the most here:**

Where did this happen?

Who did this to you?

When did this happen? (During the School Term or School Holidays)

Who did you tell about this experience?

Q16. Did you tell an adult about the experience you just listed?

Yes No

* If you answered “**No**”, please explain why, by ticking all that apply:

- I did not consider it to be serious enough to mention.
- I did not want to get into trouble with my parents.
- I did not want to get into trouble at school.
- I did not feel that anything could be done about it.
- I did not want anyone to get in trouble over it.
- I knew the person who did it and feared retaliation.
- I don't know.
- Other _____.

Q17. Did you report the incident listed in **Q15** to the Gardaí?

Yes No

* If you answered “**No**”, please explain why, by checking all that apply:

- I did not consider the incident(s) to be serious enough to report.
- I do not have faith in the Gardaí.
- I did not feel that anything would be done about the incident(s).
- I did not want anyone to get into trouble over the incident(s).
- I knew the person who did it and feared retaliation.
- What happened to me is not considered a crime, and so, could not be reported.
- I don't know.
- Other _____.

Q18. How did having this experience, the one that bothered you the most (that you talked about in **Q15.**), make you feel?
Please explain:

Q19. What effects have being a victim had on the following five areas of your life:
Please tick (✓) one box for each of the five areas.

	<i>Harmed A Lot</i>	<i>Harmed A Bit</i>	<i>Did Not Affect</i>	<i>Improved A Lot</i>	<i>Improved A Bit</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>1 – Social Life</i>						
<i>2 – Relationships with Friends</i>						
<i>3 – Relationships with Family</i>						
<i>4 – School Performance</i>						
<i>5 – Self-Confidence</i>						

Q20. The following is a list of reasons that other young people have mentioned as possible causes for their victimisation. How often have the following been the reason you were victimised? **Please tick (✓) one box per line.**

<i>REASON</i>	Never	Sometimes	Often
Where I live.			
My race.			
My physical appearance.			
Wearing glasses.			
Having a particular hair colour.			
Being shy/quiet.			
Not being athletic/strong/sporty.			
Being more intelligent.			
Being less intelligent.			
Being gay.			
Being different.			

Q21. Since the beginning of the Summer Holidays (June 2004), how many times have the following things happened? **Please tick (√) one box per line.**

<i>EXPERIENCE</i>	Never	1-2 Times	3-4 Times	5-6 Times	More Than Six Times
A family member being hit or beaten up while outside the home.					
A brother/sister being bullied in school.					
Your home being broken into.					
Your family's car being stolen.					
Your family's home being vandalised.					
Your home or any of your family's property being damaged.					
Your neighbourhood being sprayed with graffiti.					
Gunshots being fired in your neighbourhood.					

Q22. The next question asks about things that you have done. Please remember that your answers are **private** and **confidential**. Since the beginning of the Summer Holidays (June 2004), how many times have you done the following? **Please tick (√) one box per line.**

<i>Incident</i>	Never	1-2 Times	3-4 Times	5-6 Times	More than 6 Times
<i>Damaged property with writing, carving, or graffiti of any kind</i>					
<i>Broken windows</i>					
<i>Stolen a bike</i>					
<i>Broken into and stolen from anywhere</i>					
<i>Stolen a car/gone joyriding</i>					
<i>Been in a physical fight</i>					
<i>Verbally threatened to hurt or hit someone</i>					
<i>Verbally threatened to hurt or hit someone while holding an object that could be used as a weapon</i>					

Instructions

IF YOU ANSWERED “NEVER” TO ALL OF Q22, SKIP TO Q24.

- Q23.** Did the Gardaí find out you had done any of the things you mentioned in Q22?
 Yes No

If yes, was any further action taken by the Gardaí? Please tick (✓) one box.

- I was charged with a crime and spent time in detention.
- I was charged with a crime and placed on probation.
- I was arrested but then later released.
- I was given a warning/caution.
- No further action was taken.

- Q24.** Please list the number of close friends you have: _____
 How many of these friends would you say are involved in criminal behaviour?
Please tick (✓) one box.

- None
- 1-2 Friends
- 3-4 Friends
- 5-6 Friends
- More than 6 Friends
- Don't Know

- Q25.** How much time do you usually spend doing the following things:

	A lot	Some	A little	None
Spending time with your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organised activities after school (E.g. sports, youth clubs, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hanging out with friends at weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q26.** How many evenings/nights per week (Monday – Sunday) do you usually hang out with friends with no supervision from adults? **Please tick (✓) one box.**

- Never
- 1-2 evenings/nights
- 3-4 evenings/nights
- 5-6 evenings/nights
- Every evening/night

- Q27.** When you go out (no matter what you plan on doing), when are you usually expected home? **Please tick (✓) one box per line.**

	After School & Activities	Before 7pm	Before 8pm	Before 9pm	Before 10pm	Before 11pm	Midnight or Later
During the School Week							
At Weekends							

Q28. Who do you spend most of your free time with?

After School : _____

Evenings/Nights:

During the Weekend:

Q29. How do you normally spend your free time?

*** Please Tick all that apply.**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging Out at Friends House |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Complex/Cinema | <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging Out in the City Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging Out in Shopping Centres | <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging Out in the Local Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging Out at Boyfriend/Girlfriend's House | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth clubs/Organised Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gaming: XBox, Computer, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Q30. Do your parents/guardian(s) restrict any of the following activities?

Please tick (✓) one box per line.

Activity	YES	NO
<i>What you watch on TV/at the cinema</i>		
<i>What you read</i>		
<i>What music you listen to</i>		

Q31. When you spend your free time away from home, do your parents/guardian(s) usually know where you are?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Always | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Q32. When you spend your free time away from home, do your parents/guardian(s) usually know who you are with?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Always | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Q33. Do your parents/guardian(s) know who most of your friends are?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Q34. Do your parents/guardian(s) allow you to be friends with whoever you want?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Q35. Do your parents/guardian(s) regularly phone you on your mobile to find out where you are and/or when you will be home?

Yes No Don't Know

Q36. Would you be asked to explain yourself if you did not answer a call(s) from a parent or guardian?

Yes No Don't Know

Q37. Do you regularly do any of the following activities?

Please tick (√) one box per line.

Activity	Never	1-2 Days	3-4 Days	5-6 Days	Every Day
<i>Drink Alcohol of Any Kind</i>					
<i>Smoke Cigarettes</i>					
<i>Smoke Hash/Dope</i>					
<i>Inhaling Solvents like aerosols, gas, or glue</i>					
<i>Pop Es</i>					
<i>Do harder drugs like coke or heroin</i>					

Q38. Please indicate the extent to which you **agree or disagree** with the following statements, by ticking the appropriate box.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe while I am at school.					
I feel safe walking home from school.					
My neighbourhood is safe.					
I feel safe walking around my neighbourhood at night.					
I worry about becoming a victim of crime.					
I worry about getting into trouble with the Gardaí.					
Most Gardaí do a good job.					
Most Gardaí can be trusted.					
Most Gardaí treat adults more fairly than young people.					
Parents who are aware of their child's whereabouts and daily activities can help prevent their victimisation.					

Q39. Please list any ways that you feel schools, parents/guardians, and other adults could help in the prevention of youth victimisation:

Schools:

Parents/Guardians

Other Adults:

Q40. Is there anything else that you would like to say about youth crime and victimisation?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Appendix B: Initial Letter Sent To All Schools



Date

**Principal X
(Identifying Information Removed)**

Dear Mr. X,

My name is Kalis Pope, and I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Social Sciences, Dublin Institute of Technology, Mountjoy Square. I am a doctoral candidate investigating young people's experiences of crime, specifically the victimisation of inner-city Dublin youth. As there is no data on youth victimisation in inner-city Dublin to date, I am hoping that you will agree to participate in this research.

I am planning on issuing a questionnaire during the months of March and April, 2005, on a date that is most convenient to you, your teachers, and your students. My goal is to include fourth and fifth year classes from each of the twenty schools located in D-1, D-2, D-7, and D-8. I will also be including young people attending Youthreach centres in the area, in order to gain some perspective on the victimisation experiences of young people that are not attending school. The project typically takes 40 - 45 minutes to complete, and the classes can either participate as one large group, or smaller groups, depending on your preference. All questionnaires will be completed anonymously.

I am looking forward to discussing this project further with you. I will be writing to you again soon, in order to provide you with additional information, including a copy of the questionnaire for your review. If you have any questions or comments in the meantime, please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail. I hope that you have a great mid-term break. Thank you very much for your time.

Kind Regards,

Kalis Pope

Phone: 01-402-4268 (w); 087-670-7267 (m)

E-mail: kalis.pope@dit.ie

Web page:

www.dit.ie/DIT/appliedarts/ssls/socialsciences/research/graduate/Kalis_Pope.html

Appendix C: Follow-Up Letter for Those Who Had Not Yet Confirmed Their Participation



Date

Principal X

Re: Young People's Experiences of Crime Research Project

Dear Mr. X,

I am writing to you today in order to provide you with additional information regarding my doctoral research project. As I mentioned in my previous letter, I am investigating young people's experiences of crime, specifically the victimisation of inner-city Dublin youth. The questionnaire I am planning on issuing to fourth and fifth year students is enclosed for your review. Students will require approximately 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I am very excited about the possibility of including your school in my research and hope that you will agree to participate. I will be telephoning your office this week in order to achieve the following:

- 1) To answer any questions that you may have regarding the project.
- 2) To confirm your school's participation in the project.
- 3) To schedule either a phone or personal meeting, whichever you prefer, in order to discuss the procedure for distributing the questionnaire.

My goal is to make this process as convenient as possible for you, while achieving the level of school participation necessary to guarantee my project's success. To this end, I am willing to be very flexible in order to ensure your school's participation.

Thank you very much for both your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you this week.

Kind Regards,

Kalis Pope
Phone: 01-402-4268 (w); 087-670-7267 (m)
E-mail: kalis.pope@dit.ie

Appendix D: Follow-Up Letter to Participating Principals



Date

Principal X
(Identifying Information Removed)

Re: Young People's Experiences of Crime Research Project

Dear Mr. X,

I would like to thank you again for agreeing to take part in this research. I honestly cannot thank you enough for both your time and your help. I really enjoyed speaking to you on the phone last week and am looking forward to meeting you in person.

As I mentioned, since my research focuses on 15-17 year olds, I would like to survey as many of the 4th/transition year and 5th year students attending your school, as possible. I am willing to wait several hours in between classes at your school, and/or to survey classes together in large groups, or on separate days, in order to accomplish this goal with as little trouble to your school as possible.

I have enclosed the project materials that you will need for this project:

- 1) **Procedure Document** – there are only 5 simple steps involved, including scheduling my visit in April/May, at the most convenient time for you and your staff.
- 2) **Letter to Parents/Guardians** – this is a draft of the letter that will be sent to all parents/guardians of fourth (transition) and fifth year students, asking for permission to involve their child in this research. The letter also includes a “parental withdrawal form” that should be used by those who do not want their child to participate.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at any time.
Thank you again and hope you have a very Happy Easter.

Kind Regards,

Kalis Pope
Phone: 01-402-4268 (w); 087-670-7267 (m); E-mail: kalis.pope@dit.ie

Appendix E: Survey Procedure for School Secretaries/Principals



PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

- 1) **Determine number of stamped envelopes needed for letters to parents**
I will need to know the total number of fourth/transition year and fifth year students attending your school. This is so I can send you the appropriate number of stamped envelopes, which will contain the “Letter to Parents/Guardians”.

- 2) **Affix address labels**
You will need to appoint a staff member to arrange for labels containing the addresses of the parents/guardians of all fourth/transition year and fifth year students to be affixed to the stamped envelopes. Ethical guidelines require me to obtain parental consent from anyone under the age of 18. If for any reason, you think affixing these labels might be too burdensome, please contact me and I will be happy to visit your school in order to affix the labels. The reason that I cannot do this myself, in the first instance, is that I do not have access to these addresses.

- 3) **Mail letters and Note date of mailing**
The letters will need to be mailed to parents/guardians, who will be given approximately one week from the date of mailing to withdraw their child from the study. Due to this fact, it is important to keep a note of this mailing date for scheduling purposes.

- 4) **Keep track of returned forms**
The “Letter to Parents/Guardians” asks parents/guardians to indicate if their child is not allowed to participate in the survey by returning the “parental withdrawal form”, located at the bottom of the letter, to the school. Please keep track of these forms so that we may instruct any young people who are not allowed to participate in the study to read or work on homework instead.

- 5) **Schedule visit to the school**

Appendix F: Letter to Parents/Guardians – Survey Research



Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Kalis Pope, and I am a postgraduate student at the Dublin Institute of Technology, Mountjoy Square. I am currently working on a research project that will examine young people’s experiences of crime, specifically, the victimisation of inner-city Dublin youth. I am undertaking this research because there are no statistics on youth victimisation in inner-city Dublin to date, and these statistics are vital to understanding the experiences of young people.

My research involves asking 15-17 year olds who are attending schools and Youthreach centres in Dublin 1, Dublin 2, Dublin 7, and Dublin 8 to fill in a survey. This survey will be completely anonymous and will contain questions on background information, experiences with victimisation, experiences with crime, friends, free time activities, and parental/guardian supervision. In the coming weeks, I will be issuing the survey to your child’s class.

*If your son/daughter is **Allowed** to fill in the survey, you do not need to do anything further.

*If your son/daughter is **Not Allowed** to participate, please fill in the form at the bottom of this page and return it to *Mr. X*.

Should you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Kalis Pope

Phone: 01-402-4268 (w) E-mail: kalis.pope@dit.ie

.....✂.....

Parental Withdrawal Form:

As parent/guardian of _____ [child’s name], I **Do Not** wish for him/her to complete the survey on “Young People’s Experiences of Crime.”

Appendix G: Letter to Parents/Guardians –Focus Group Research



Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Kalis Pope, and I am a postgraduate student at the Dublin Institute of Technology, Mountjoy Square. I am currently working on a research project that will examine young people’s experiences of crime, specifically, the victimisation of inner-city Dublin youth. I am undertaking this research because there are no statistics on the experiences of young people in inner-city Dublin to date.

My research involves asking 15-17 year old girls to participate in focus groups and possibly interviews. Research participants and the information they give me will remain completely anonymous. The groups will be made up of approximately 4-5 girls and will discuss things such as background information, experiences with victimisation, experiences with crime, friends, free-time activities, and parental/guardian supervision. At the end of the focus groups, a few girls may be asked to participate in a further interview on a strictly volunteer basis. Again, participant identities will play no role in the research and will be kept private and confidential to the researcher. Your daughter has volunteered to participate in the research.

*If your daughter is **Allowed** to participate in these focus groups/interviews, you do not need to do anything further.

*If your daughter is **Not Allowed** to participate, please have her return this form to me and tell her to let me know that she is not allowed.

Should you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Kalis Pope

Phone: 01-402-4268 (w) E-mail: kalis.pope@dit.ie

.....✂.....

Parental Withdrawal Form:

As parent/guardian of _____ [child’s name], I **Do Not** wish for him/her to complete the survey on “Young People’s Experiences of Crime.”

Appendix H: Survey Research Consent Form



YOUTH CRIME RESEARCH PROJECT CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Kalis Pope

Institute: Dublin Institute of Technology, Department of Social Sciences

Title of Study: Young People's Experiences of Crime - An Investigation into the
Victimisation and Offending of Inner-City Dublin Youth

If you understand the following five statements and agree to participate in this research project, which will be written as a report, please sign your name below.

- 1) I have received enough information about this research and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2) I understand that all of my answers will remain confidential and anonymous, unless there is evidence that myself or someone else might be in danger.
- 3) I understand that this consent form will be private to the researcher.
- 4) I understand that these findings will be published in a report, and that all answers will remain anonymous.
- 5) I understand that I do not have to take part in this research and that nothing will happen to me if I do not participate.

X _____
Date:

Appendix I: Focus Group Research Consent Form



YOUTH CRIME RESEARCH PROJECT CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Kalis Pope

Institute: Dublin Institute of Technology, Department of Social Sciences

Title of Study: Young People's Experiences of Crime - An Investigation into the
Victimisation and Offending of Inner-City Dublin Youth

If you understand the following five statements and agree to participate in this research project, which will be written as a report, please sign your name below.

- 1) I have received enough information about this research and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2) I understand that all of my answers will remain confidential and anonymous, unless there is evidence that myself or someone else might be in danger.
- 3) I understand that this consent form will be private to the researcher.
- 4) I understand that this session will be tape recorded, so that the researcher can go back over our answers, and that all answers will remain anonymous.
- 5) I understand that I do not have to take part in this research and that nothing will happen to me if I do not participate.

X _____
Date:

Appendix J: List of Helplines and Resources for Young People

Helplines and Resources for Young People

1) Telephone Helplines

ISPCC: 01/6794944

Childline: 1-800-666-666

Break the Silence: 0506/31590

Victim Support: 01/6798673

Stay Safe Unit: 01/6232358

The Bully Free Group: 01/348175

2) Youth Resources

ISPCC

20 Molesworth St., Dublin 1

Telephone Number: 01/6794944

Barnardo's National Children's Resource Centre

Christchurch Sq., Dublin 8

Telephone Number: 01/530355

Mental Health Association of Ireland

Mensana House, 6 Adelaide Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Telephone Number: 01/2841166

National Association for Victims of Bullying

Frederick Street, Clara, Co. Offaly

Telephone Number: 0506/31590

Campaign Against Bullying

72 Lakelands Avenue, Kilmacud, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

Telephone Number: 01/2887976

3) Local Help

For individual help, you can always contact your local juvenile liaison officer, local child guidance centre, local health board social worker, and/or staff at your school. Contact information for these individuals can be found in the directory or by calling 1411.

Appendix K: DIT Ethical Approval for PhD

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Príod: Báb Keanagh, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.A. (Hons)



**DUBLIN INSTITUTE
of TECHNOLOGY**

Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Búille Aibh Cliaich

Office of Graduate Studies and Research
Dublin Institute of Technology
Rathmines Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

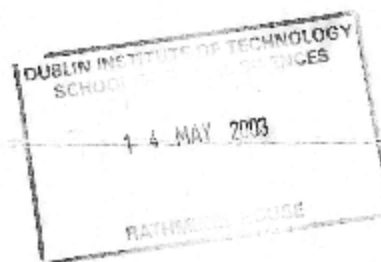
Tel: +353-1-402 7667

Fax: +353-1-402 7674

E-mail: postgraduate@dit.ie

12th May 2003

Dr Kevin Lalor
Department of Social Sciences
School of Social Sciences and Legal Studies
DIT Rathmines House
Dublin 6



Dear Kevin,

I wish to confirm that the DIT Research Ethics Committee has considered your project "Youth Crime Research Project – Young People's Experiences of Crime: Youth as Victims" at its meeting of 2nd May 2003.

The Committee has agreed to grant ethical approval to the above project.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Hazelkorn'.

PP
Dr Ellen Hazelkorn
Chairperson of the DIT Research Ethics Committee