Current Status of School Break-ins in Saipan

Research Project

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Author Note

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**Abstract**

“The Current Status of School Break-ins in Saipan” is a research report by Tasha Deleon Guerrero, a Northern Marianas College student. The purpose of this research is to find out information about the school break-ins on Saipan. Two surveys of the research topic was distributed to students of Northern Marianas College. The NMC students were part of two English academic writing courses. Three interviews have been conducted with experts on the topic. Interesting findings were found in the surveys. One of the findings was the difference between the chances of a public school being burglarized verses a private school. Another finish was that in all three interviews the interviewees mentioned that majority of the people who break–in to schools are juveniles. These experts also shared the same idea that the government and community need to be more involved in preventing these juveniles from committing the burglaries. The information in this report reveals why these break-ins happen and the measures being taken to stop them.

Recently a few schools in Saipan have been broken into by troubled kids. These break-ins have caused some to question the safety and security of Saipan schools. To avoid these events some believe the government should establish programs to reach out to these underprivileged children. The research will mainly focus on the current update on school break-ins on Saipan. The research will be supported by interviews with experts, surveys from the community, literature sources, and a schedule of gathering and writing information.

Some of the schools have been broken into are Mount Carmel School, Saipan Community School, and William S. Reyes Elementary School. Most of these break-ins occurred late at night when the campus grounds are unattended. Mount Carmel School was burglarized in 2013. The high school building was broken into and various items from students’ lockers were stolen. The break-in of Saipan Community School occurred in 2011. A single classroom was broken into and the teacher of said classroom’s items were stolen.

There are many reasons as to why these schools are getting burglarized. Some may say it is due to economy, location, drug use, families, etc. According to Officer Joseph Muna (February 03, 2015), the people who burglarized the school are most likely the people living within the area. The economy and its people are facing hard times and due to these events crime rate increases. Mount Carmel School’s President Galvin Deleon Guerrero (January 31, 2015) stated that the people who robbed his were children who came from broken homes and are facing poverty.

To conclude, many has been said about how and why these robberies occurred but the question is has anything been done about it. Through interviews with the police force and schools, I will learn about the break-ins and what has been done to stop them. Also I will interview students, victims, and the juveniles that broke-in to gather their output of the events.

**Literature Review**

Saipan is such a small island, that Saipan’s communities often seem like one big family. Which is why the news of children breaking into schools is quite distressing. The student researcher took an interest in this topic because she was once a victim, of a break-in, at her old high school. She claims, “To see lockers broken open, and personal belongings thrown around and vandalized, was very shocking.” The student researcher began questioning who would do something like this, and why. She began her review of literature through using Google Scholar and EBSCO. She also gathered secondary information from newspaper sites such as The Saipan Tribune and The Marianas Variety. This essay, introduces a brief review of literature on the topic of juvenile crimes in schools.

The student researcher, began gathering information from Google Scholar. By typing the key words “juvenile delinquency in schools” she found over 250,000 thousand results. Most of the articles found provided information on the causes and effects of juvenile delinquency. Ray E. Bilderaya’ article “Juvenile Delinquency” illustrates that juvenile delinquency can be caused by family status, family type, exposure to violence and victimization, and antisocial behavior (Juvenile Delinquency: Cause and, 2005, para.12). A similar search was done with EBSCO eBooks, using the key words “School Break-ins” was unsuccessful because it was such a narrow topic her search was a dead end. So instead of searching school break-ins, she searched using the key words “juvenile delinquency” and found a variety of information. She discovered Cullingford’s book called “*The Causes of Exclusion*”, which goes into depth as to why children perform criminal acts. According to the literature there is a strong link between criminals and poverty (Cullingford, 1999 p.3). Another book she found was Collin and Neli’s book called “Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice” which explains some cures for juvenile aggression such as sports. Stated by Collin and Neil, sports based schemes are used to assist adolescents develop into responsible adults (p.93). The researcher plans on using these primary source to inform her secondary questions which why these crimes are happening and how to prevent them.

Juvenile delinquency is on the rise, in some places such as the United States, including the Pacific Islands. The researcher began her research by browsing the Saipan Tribune website for juvenile crime articles. One of the articles found, depicted the crime capitals of Saipan. The article cited Chalan Kanoa as being the crime capitol of Saipan, followed by Kagman, then DanDan (CK Susupe Crime Capitol, 2014, para. 3). A variety of articles pertaining to recent school crimes from the years 2013-2014 were also identified. These articles cited juvenile delinquency as being connected to school crimes. Such as the break-in of Mount Carmel School in 2013(4 Juvenile arrested for, 2013), and the vandalism of Kagman Elementary School in 2014(Jayson Camacho, 2013). On the break-in of Mount Carmel the news article cited that 4 juvenile were arrested for the 2 burglaries (4 Juvenile arrested for, 2013). The second article about Kagman elementary cited that six juveniles were suspected of vandalism (Jayson Camacho, 2013). The researcher plans to use these secondary resources found as background to explain the current status of school break-ins on Saipan.

To conclude, the process of collecting sources for school break-ins was a success. The researcher discovered informative articles on recent school break-ins in Saipan. The search for books on the topic was a success as well. The student researcher found two books that go into depth, on the behavior of juvenile delinquents and the variety of possible cures for juvenile aggression. From the information gathered the researcher was able to define the current status of reported school break-ins, find some reasons that may answer why these crimes occurred, and locate advice from experts on how to prevent adolescents from committing them again.

Primary Question:

What is the current status of school break-ins in Saipan?

Secondary Questions:

1. What are the procedures taken to solve these break-ins?
2. Who commits these break-ins?
3. Why are these people breaking into schools?
4. What is being done to prevent these break-ins?
5. What happens to the people who commit them?

**Methodology**

To begin collecting data, the researcher scheduled interviews with experts. The first interview was with Mount Carmel School’s President Galvin Deleon Guerrero, on January 31, 2015. The student researcher was a former student who knew Mr. Deleon Guerrero. She scheduled an informal interview with him where he explained his feeling about the break-ins and the experience with working alongside the police. The second interview was with Officer Joseph Muna, on February 3, 2015. She interviewed Officer Muna because he worked on the Mount Carmel School break-ins. The interview was an informal one which was not recorded. Officer Muna explained his experience and feelings about the break-ins. The research was also able to gather information from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) with the help of Officer Muna. On February 17, 2015, the research received an email containing the information of the school robberies that occurred in the last 5 years. Lastly, the researcher interviewed the Supervisor of Juvenile Probation, Sylvio Ada Jr., on February 25, 2015.  She interviewed Mr. Ada because he worked with those juveniles who committed the break-ins. This interview was also informal and not recorded. In the interview, Mr. Ada discussed his work and the types of people he encounters in the job. Overall the researcher interviewed experts who had experience with recent school break-ins.

A pilot study was designed to collect general knowledge and test the effectiveness of question types used.  The pilot study was created in late February using an electronic survey service called “Survey Monkey”. The original survey consisted of ten questions. Question one was a demographic question asking about gender, age, and nationality etc., this information is important because it allowed for variables to be analyzed later. The rest of the questions included a comment box, so the participants were able to elaborate their answers. It was given to 10 Northern Marianas College (NMC) students enrolled in an Academic English course. The survey was distributed using a shared Google doc’s page where 5 students provided feedback and suggestions on how to improve the questions asked. For example, there were 3 repetitive questions, so the researcher changed two of the questions to the questions that were suggested on the feedback (See Appendix D).

The purpose for the pilot survey was to figure out which questions would benefit the research. The NMC student survey was developed from a redraft of the earlier pilot study. It was distributed on March 16, 2015 to collect general information from the student researcher’s peers on the current status of school break-ins on Saipan. The researcher received feedback from 5 students and awaits for the rest of the students to complete her survey before analyzing her results.

**Analysis**

The data collected consisted of eleven responses from my surveys and three interviews with experts. From the eleven response 5 were males and 6 were females. The ages ranged from 19-26, majority were nineteen and twenty. The outcome of the survey did not produce much information. The only thing that was significant was question number six. More than half of the respondents believed that juvenile who repeatedly burglarize schools should be tried as adults. Many of their responses were that the juveniles’ consequence should be jail time. After analyzing the surveys the results were not as helpful in the end.

Although the interviews with experts were very successful. The researcher’s primary questions and secondary questions were able to be answered during those three interviews. All three of the experts had experience with the Mount Carmel School break-ins. Galvin Guerrero is the President of Mount Carmel School, Officer Joe Muna worked on the case, and Probation Supervisor Sylvio Ada worked with the juveniles who burglarized MCS. Another thing my experts had in common was that they all believed that to prevent these incidents the government and the community should be more involved. They believed that the government should offer more programs to help keep these kids out of trouble. In all three of my interviews, the interviewees all said that these juveniles are just underprivileged and doing what they can to make money.

**Discussion**

The information from the interviews with experts were similar to the information found in the literature. In the “*The Causes of Exclusion*” by Cullingford, it stated that one of main cause for juvenile delinquency was poverty. That information was also stated in all three of the researcher’s interviews. Another relation was in the literature “Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice” by Collin and Neli’s, it explained how sports can be a great cure for juvenile aggression. In her interviews both Officer Muna and Probation Supervisor Ada empathized that the community needs sport programs available for underprivileged children. The need for more outreach programs was repeatedly stated in her interviews. From time to time, if not most of the time, the juveniles who caught committing the crime end up committing them again. It goes to show that more should be done to help these children stop their bad choices.

**Conclusion**

The researcher was indeed successful in answering her primary and secondary questions. Even though the survey was as effective as she hoped it would, her interview with experts were proven very helpful. From her three interviews with experts she discovered new and interesting information about the crimes and the juveniles. She learned the types of programs offered to the juveniles who commit the break-ins and how effective they are in preventing them. Her finding in her literature search was also effective. She was able to relate the information found in her literature sources and interview findings. Overall, the research project was interesting and successful.

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**Appendices**

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Appendix A: Informal Interview (1)

Interviewer: Tasha Deleon Guerrero

Interviewee: Mount Carmel School’s President Galvin Deleon Guerrero

His experience and feelings towards his school break-ins (2013-2014)

* First robbery in school history solved
* From the previous break-ins that Mount Carmel School had two years ago, they installed security systems
* Mount Carmel worked closely with Department of Public Safety(DPS)
* Mr. G stated, “Mount Carmel did more than just file a report.”
* They involved a task force of the Public School System, Department of Youth Services, Attorney General’s Office, and members of the community
* Members of the community were a great help
* Galvin took the break-ins very personal
* During the investigations he learned that the people who broke in were adolescents, who came from broken homes and faced poverty. By learning this information Galvin decided to enforce his students and faculty to be more involved in the community.

Appendix B: Informal Interview (2)

Interviewer: Tasha Deleon Guerrero

Interviewee: Police Officer Joseph Muna

His knowledge, experience, and feelings in working with school break-ins.

* Ninety percent of the time it is the students who live around the area that commit the crimes
* Difference between private school and public school
* Private School

1. Small setting
2. Regulated
3. Security is a lot better because of the school’s size
4. Availability of funds to get better security

* Public School

1. More accessible
2. Large setting
3. Not enough security for a large school
4. Not enough funds for better security

* Reaction :
* The community needs to reach out to these troubled kids
* The government should set up programs to help the troubled kids
* These school break-ins are big issues.
* At times it can be difficult to solve these cases due to lack of evidence.

Appendix C: Informal Interview (3)

Interviewer: Tasha Deleon Guerrero

Interviewee: Sylvio Ada Jr.

1. What type of kids do you work with?
   * Juveniles referred by the court, Attorney General, schools, and parents.
2. How do you guys help them?
   * Probation programs, counseling, rehabilitation programs
3. Are you guys successful in improving their lives?
   * Yes, so so
4. Do you think more should be done to prevent these kids from getting into trouble?
   * Yes, like youth centers and outreach programs
5. Have you worked with the juveniles who burglarized schools?
   * Yes
6. If yes, do you have a speculation on why they did it?
   * WSR: Drug related. Assisted by an adult.
   * MCS: Broken homes. Stolen items were to be sold for food. The Juvenile probation program offered them food stamps
   * Kagman Elementary: vandalism and graffiti

Appendix D

















