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Editorial

Richard Bartholomew

Editor

*Welcome to the fifth issue of **Social Research Practice**, the SRA's journal for methods in applied social research.*

For 'millennials' and the so-called 'Generation Z' (those born post-2000) smartphones are now one of the most popular, if not the predominant, means for going online. To engage young people, researchers increasingly need to ensure that surveys can be easily accessed and completed using the smartphone screen. But the constraints of the smartphone format and the social context of its use may pose particular challenges for question design, completion rates and the quality of response obtained. Are researchers' concerns about the possible adverse consequences for surveys of smartphone use well grounded? In **'Surveying young people in the smartphone age'** Peter Matthews and colleagues provide a careful exploration of these concerns using data from the fourth wave of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2 (LSYPE2). Importantly, they take into account, and control for, demographic differences between those who prefer to use smartphones and those who prefer to use PCs and tablets. Their conclusions are somewhat reassuring though these may not necessarily be transferable to older respondents.

In their article on **'Map-making and walking interviews'** George Dake and Alastair Roy explore the potential for using this novel approach to conduct research on sensitive topics where it is difficult to gain the trust, or to understand the perspectives, of vulnerable and marginalised individuals – in this case male sex workers in Manchester. The processes of constructing maps of locations/routes and conducting interviews whilst walking in these areas act as mediation tools. In this case, they allow the male sex worker to tell his own story rather than having an external interpretation imposed upon him. Such an approach can help identify forms of help and advice which will be more likely to be acceptable to those supported. But the map-making and walking method can be of value in a much wider range of contexts in which people find it difficult to identify and articulate their needs or concerns.

On a related theme but in a very different context, our third article **'Evaluating Holiday Kitchen'**, by Jane O'Connor and colleagues, assesses innovative approaches for capturing the views and perspectives of very young children, including pre-schoolers, taking part in a summer holiday food and activity programme. These approaches include primarily visual methods such as a 'weather map' and a 'tree of hope' which do not depend on children having written language skills. Interestingly, these methods were also popular with parents, volunteers and staff involved in the programme.

Finally, thank you to all those who responded to our recent request for new articles and research notes. I have already been in touch with many of you, and will be contacting others as soon as possible. We hope to feature some of these articles in the next issue in summer 2018.

If you are interested in offering a research note or a full article for Social Research Practice please visit the dedicated page of the SRA website <http://the-sra.org.uk/journal-social-research-practice/> where you can read the guidelines for authors and download the template for articles. If you have an idea for an article but are not sure if will be suitable, just drop me a line: rabartholomew@btinternet.com

Surveying young people in the smartphone age

Peter Matthews and Emily Bell, Kantar Public, and Alexander Wenz, University of Essex

Abstract

Smartphones are now the most commonly used device for young people to access the internet. However, there are concerns about the quality of responses received from those completing online surveys on smartphones as opposed to other devices. So far, the evidence has been mixed although little research has focused on young people in particular.

This paper presents evidence of the effect of smartphone completion on response quality amongst a cohort of young people aged 16-17, who have grown up in the time of widespread smartphone use. Using data from the fourth wave of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2 (LSYPE2), we investigated five areas of data quality: missingness, satisficing, survey length, response accuracy and social desirability bias. Our principal conclusion is that there is little evidence that the quality of data is any lower for young people who take part on smartphones compared with other devices.

Funding acknowledgement

Department for Education

Introduction

Young people today are the first generation growing up in a time when smartphones are the normative method for going online. Smartphones are now the most commonly used device for young people aged 12-15 to access the internet (43%, up from just 5% in 2011) (Ofcom, 2016); 94% of young adults aged 16-24 use a smartphone to go online (Ofcom, 2017). Indeed, around one in eight young adults aged 16-24 said they use **only** a smartphone to access the internet.

But, at a time when more and more research is being conducted online, smartphones can make researchers nervous. The evidence is fairly mixed although, broadly speaking, smartphone respondents tend to take longer to complete surveys, and are more likely to fail to complete a survey once they have started ('breaking off') compared with respondents using other devices. There are also concerns that the quality of responses obtained via smartphones may be lower than other devices with some evidence of increased satisficing behaviours and item non-response when a smartphone is used (see for example Struminskaya et al, 2015 for a summary of previous research).

Relatively little of this research, however, is focused on young people. These are the respondents who will be using smartphones the most in their daily lives, and who are most likely to use a smartphone to complete a survey. So, if there are any implications for data quality from respondents' choice of device, these may be particularly problematic for research with young people.

In this article, we analyse data from online responses to the fourth wave of the second cohort of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE2) to assess the impacts of device choice on response quality among young people.

LSYPE2 is a longitudinal survey following a random sample of young people from the ages of 13/14 to 19/20. The first three waves used face-to-face data collection. At wave four, when the respondents were aged 16/17, a sequential mixed-mode design (web, telephone then face-to-face) was introduced. Wave four was, therefore, the first wave for which data was collected online. The questionnaire covered a range of topics including respondents' health and wellbeing, their experience of education, and their plans for the future. On average, the online questionnaire took a little over 30 minutes to complete.

In this article, first, we briefly outline the challenges smartphone completion poses for researchers. Second, we describe the analysis we conducted using LSYPE2. Third, we focus in more detail on two areas of data quality which have received relatively little attention in previous research: validating respondents' answers, and the relationship between device choice and responses to sensitive questions. Finally, we offer some conclusions about online research with young people.

The smartphone problem

It is quite a challenge to move a large, complex survey such as LSYPE2 from a single mode to a mixed-mode design. One major problem for the fourth wave of LSYPE2 was to ensure that questions originally designed for a face-to-face survey worked effectively in a telephone or online mode.

The question is essentially one of **compatibility**: if respondents answer a survey differently in one mode to how they would have answered it in another (known as 'measurement effects') then it is difficult to analyse interviews of multiple modes together because of the differential biases associated with each mode.

There is a similar challenge within online data collection about the possibility of between-device measurement effects. In other words, how confident are we that a respondent's answers would not differ at all if they completed the survey on a smartphone or tablet rather than a PC or laptop?

In preparation for the fourth wave of LSYPE2, we conducted usability testing in which researchers observed young people as they completed the survey. The survey software automatically resizes content to the size of screen being used, but we also wanted to ensure that the survey was reasonably user-friendly on a range of devices.

Beyond this, there was little attempt to 'optimise' the survey for smartphones: for example, redesigning question layouts or reducing question wording. This was because of the need to ensure consistency as far as possible with the face-to-face and telephone modes. In short, the LSYPE2 wave four survey was designed as a face-to-face survey, translated into an online mode, and made available to smartphone users.

There are three broad reasons why we might expect responses to differ based on device. First is the issue of **display**. With a much smaller screen size, identical content will be rendered very differently on a smartphone screen to a larger PC or laptop screen. Respondents may well find a survey more difficult to navigate using a smartphone because of the need to scroll or zoom to read all the information.

Second is the very different **interface** used for smartphones. The touchscreen method employed for smartphones may be less accurate and more prone to error than a mouse-based input system, especially when the screen size is small. This can make it difficult for respondents to choose the correct answer in a survey, leading to greater levels of inaccuracy, or increased frustration for respondents. Additionally, typing tends to take longer on a smartphone than when using a full-size keyboard. Open-ended responses are, therefore, likely to be more burdensome for smartphone respondents than those using larger devices.

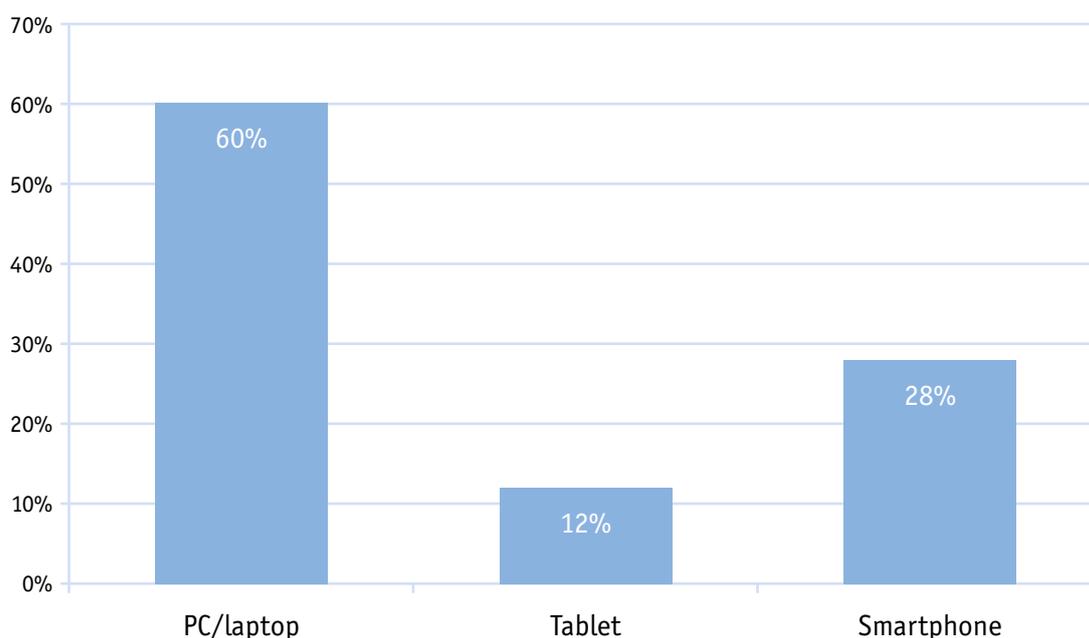
Finally, there may be **psychological** differences in how smartphones are used. Smartphones are much less likely to be shared than other devices (especially for young people, who are unlikely to be living alone), and the smaller screen may also give an increased sense of privacy. As a result, respondents may give more honest answers on a smartphone than on other devices (Pelleg et al, 2013). On the other hand, it has been suggested that the variety of settings in which smartphones are used may affect respondent concentration or a respondent's sense of privacy (for example, the presence of bystanders if using a smartphone while travelling) and, through this, influence the responses given (Mavletova and Couper, 2013).

One challenge for the researcher, then, is that these factors may lead to differences in measurement. Such differences are confounded, however, by the fact that the respondents who choose to complete a survey using a smartphone are, on average, quite different to the respondents who complete the survey using larger devices. It is extremely hard to disentangle any measurement effects from these natural differences between respondents (known as ‘selection effects’). Further, if there is a ‘device effect’ in the data collected through online surveys, it will not affect all types of respondent equally.

Selection effects in LSYPE2

A little more than a quarter of online respondents at the fourth wave of LSYPE2 completed the survey using a smartphone (figure 1). These were respondents who chose to use a smartphone despite the advice in the invitation letters and emails that they should use a PC, laptop or tablet ‘as this will mean you have the best experience of the survey’.

Figure 1: Devices used by online respondents in LSYPE2 wave four



Base: 2,932

The profile of those respondents who chose to use a smartphone was very different to that of other online respondents. We used a multinomial logistic regression to understand how demographic characteristics were associated with the likelihood of completing the survey by smartphone, tablet or PC/laptop. We examined a range of factors including gender, education level, tenure, employment status and household income.

Smartphone respondents were much more likely to be female and to have a job. Respondents with higher education levels (that is, achieved a greater number of GCSEs), living in above-median household income homes, or whose parents owned their own home, were less likely to use a smartphone. These characteristics of smartphone respondents are broadly similar to other research (see for example Struminskaya et al, 2015).

Table 1 summarises the findings of this work to show how different respondents had a very different likelihood of completing the survey by smartphone. Example A is a respondent with an almost 50% predicted probability of using a smartphone, while example B has a predicted probability of only 16%.

It is clear that any ‘smartphone effect’ would disproportionately affect certain respondent sub-groups. Equally, in order to detect an effect on data quality, we would need to control for these demographic differences in our analysis.

Table 1: Likelihood to complete by smartphone at LSYPE2 wave four – two examples

	Example A: young person with a high likelihood of completing by smartphone	Example B: young person with a low likelihood of completing by smartphone
Gender	Female	Male
Education level	0-4 GCSEs at grades A*-C	10 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C
Tenure	Family does not own home	Family owns home
Main parent's job	Main parent does not have a job	Main parent has a job
Young person's job	Has a job	No job
Household income	Below £26,000 a year	£26,000 a year or more
Predicted probability of completing by smartphone	49%	16%

Data quality in LSYPE2

It is not straightforward to define what ‘good’ or ‘bad’ quality data looks like, and how this can be identified. The underlying hypothesis is that responses using smartphones will usually be less accurate than those obtained through other devices. In almost all cases, however, we cannot know the ‘true’ answer.

Table 2 details the indicators of data quality we looked at for LSYPE2 wave four and summarises our findings for each indicator. We were limited by the survey questions available. For example, there is evidence that smartphone respondents tend to give less detail at open-ended questions (Mavletova, 2013), but there were no suitable open-ended questions in the LSYPE2 survey for us to test this. Nonetheless, in taking a broad range of indicators, we hope to get as wide as possible a perspective on any device-related differences.

We investigated five areas of data quality:

- **Missingness:** missing data can introduce bias to survey estimates. This might be through non-response of individuals (break-offs), or item non-response (missing data at specific variables)
- **Satisficing:** satisficing refers to respondents giving insufficient cognitive attention to answering survey questions (Krosnick, 1991). It could be evident in response patterns which minimise the amount of effort required of respondents
- **Survey length:** research has consistently shown that surveys take longer on smartphones than other devices, likely because of the need for scrolling and zooming (Couper and Peterson, 2017). A substantial difference in time taken may point to increased respondent burden and, therefore, may additionally be related to increased break-offs or satisficing behaviour
- **Response accuracy:** we were able to check some of respondents’ answers against administrative databases. This allowed us to investigate whether or not there is any difference in accuracy by device
- **Social desirability bias:** for certain questions, respondents may feel pressure to give a particular ‘socially acceptable’ answer. If a greater proportion of respondents give an answer considered less socially acceptable, this could indicate a lower level of social desirability bias

For each indicator (with the exception of social desirability bias, which we discuss in more detail later in this article), we used regression-based techniques to assess whether or not a significant difference by device could be observed while controlling for differences in the demographic characteristics discussed in the previous section.

As can be seen in table 2, the break-off rate was the only data quality indicator where we found any evidence for a difference among smartphone respondents compared with PC/laptop respondents after controlling for demographic differences.

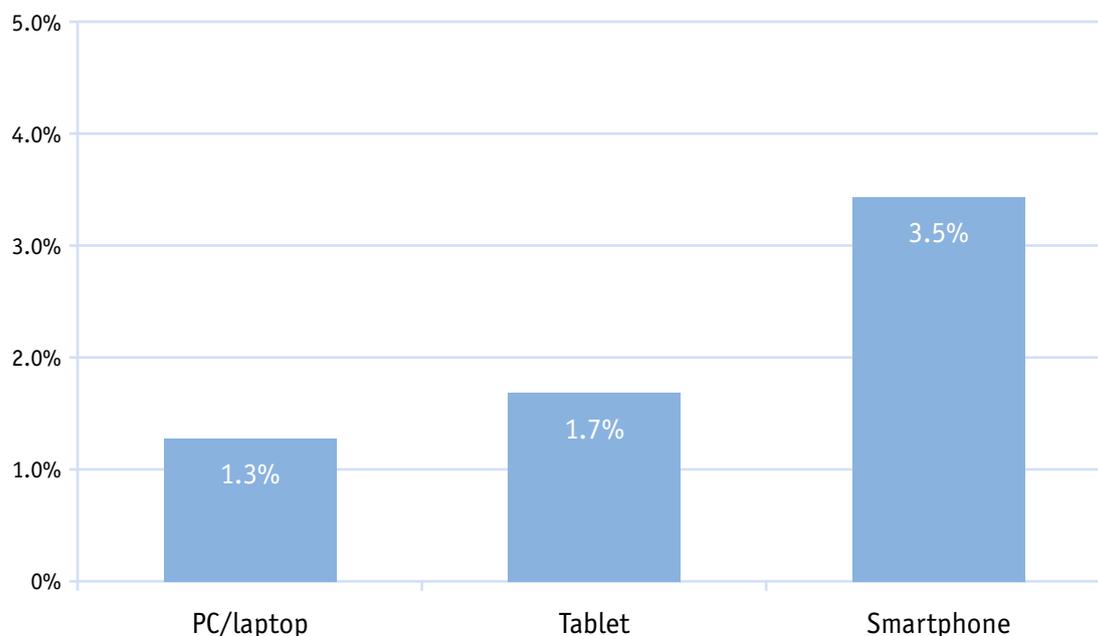
Table 2: Data quality indicators

Indicator	Description	Result
Missingness		
Break-off rates	The proportion of respondents who start the survey but do not complete it	Slightly higher break-off rate among smartphone respondents
Item non-response	The number of questions at which respondents failed to give a substantive answer ('don't know' or 'don't want to answer')	No evidence of a difference by device
Consent to data linkage	The proportion of respondents who agreed for their survey responses to be linked to administrative databases	No evidence of a difference by device
Satisficing		
Straight-lining	The proportion of respondents giving the same answer to all statements within a question battery	No evidence of a difference by device
Primacy effects	The number of questions at which respondents selected the first answer option	No evidence of a difference by device
Acquiescence effects (Likert scales)	The number of strongly agree-strongly disagree scales at which respondents selected either 'strongly agree' or 'agree'	No evidence of a difference by device
Survey length		
Completion time	The mean time taken to complete the survey	No evidence of a difference by device
Response accuracy		
Response validation	The proportion of respondents whose self-reported number of GCSEs achieved was inconsistent with administrative data	No evidence of a difference by device
Social desirability bias		
Self-reported risky behaviours	The change from wave three in the proportion of respondents admitting to certain behaviours: smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, cannabis use	No evidence of a difference between smartphones and PCs/laptops

Break-off rates

Figure 2 shows the break-off rates for respondents using smartphones, tablets and PCs/laptops. Although the break-off rates for all devices were low, they were significantly higher among smartphone respondents, even after controlling for demographic differences ($p < 0.01$). This is consistent with wider research on the impacts of smartphone completion (for example Poggio et al, 2015).

Figure 2: Break-off rates by device



Base: 1,756 (PC/laptop), 358 (tablet), 818 (smartphone)

The reasons for higher break-off rates among smartphone respondents may come down to the presentational difficulties in representing a relatively complex survey on a small screen. The more crowded screen layouts and the need for scrolling or zooming to read and answer questions may increase the sense of respondent burden, leading to a higher likelihood of failing to complete the survey.

With this in mind, it may well be possible to reduce the additional break-offs from smartphone completions through more careful and detailed design of surveys for small-screen devices. We return to this point at the end of the article.

Additionally, although a difference was observed, these break-off rates were relatively low, accounting for only 58 broken interviews from almost 3,000 individuals across all devices. While we accept that the particular context of this study is likely to lead to relatively few break-offs (the fourth wave of a longitudinal study), it is reassuring that the size of the smartphone effect here is small. With smartphone respondents still being a minority of all respondents, a slightly raised break-off rate is unlikely to have much material impact on final survey estimates.

Survey length

Although our findings about break-off rates are consistent with previous research, our findings about survey length are not. Surveys have typically been found to take longer to complete by smartphone than other devices. Table 3 gives the mean completion times by device for LSYPE2 wave four: smartphone respondents did, indeed, take longer on average. After controlling for differences in demographic characteristics, however, there is no significant difference by device choice ($p = 0.07$ for smartphones).

Instead, survey length is associated with other respondent characteristics, especially education (significant at $p < 0.001$): respondents with a higher number of GCSEs took less time to complete the survey. In fact, after controlling for **only** education level, there is no significant difference in survey length observed by device choice.

It may be the case that young people are simply faster at completing tasks on a smartphone than older adults. This would not be surprising given the fact that young people have grown up at a time when it is very common to use smartphones for online activities, and smartphones are the most common device for going online among this age group. The differences between devices may be less apparent for young people, who are more used to using a range of devices.

Table 3: Survey completion time by device

	PC/laptop	Tablet	Smartphone
Mean survey length (mm:ss)	31:04	28:12	35:44
Base	1,734	352	789

Adding to the evidence base

In this section, we describe the analysis we conducted for two further data quality indicators: the validation of respondents' answers, and the relationship between device choice and responses to sensitive questions. Although no significant difference by device was observed on these indicators, relatively little research has been conducted in these areas, and so we think it useful to discuss our findings in more depth.

Validation of respondents' answers

As noted earlier in this article, one challenge with assessing the quality of data is that it is usually impossible for a researcher to know what the 'true' answer should be. The concern is that smartphone respondents may give less accurate answers either because they are paying less attention (increased satisficing) or because of mistakes in answering the survey questions.

Antoun et al (2017), for example, found that respondents using a smartphone were more likely to give inconsistent answers when asked for their age and year of birth. The authors suggest this may be due to the particular methods of input being harder to use on a smartphone (a sliding scale was used to enter age, and a date-picker for year of birth).

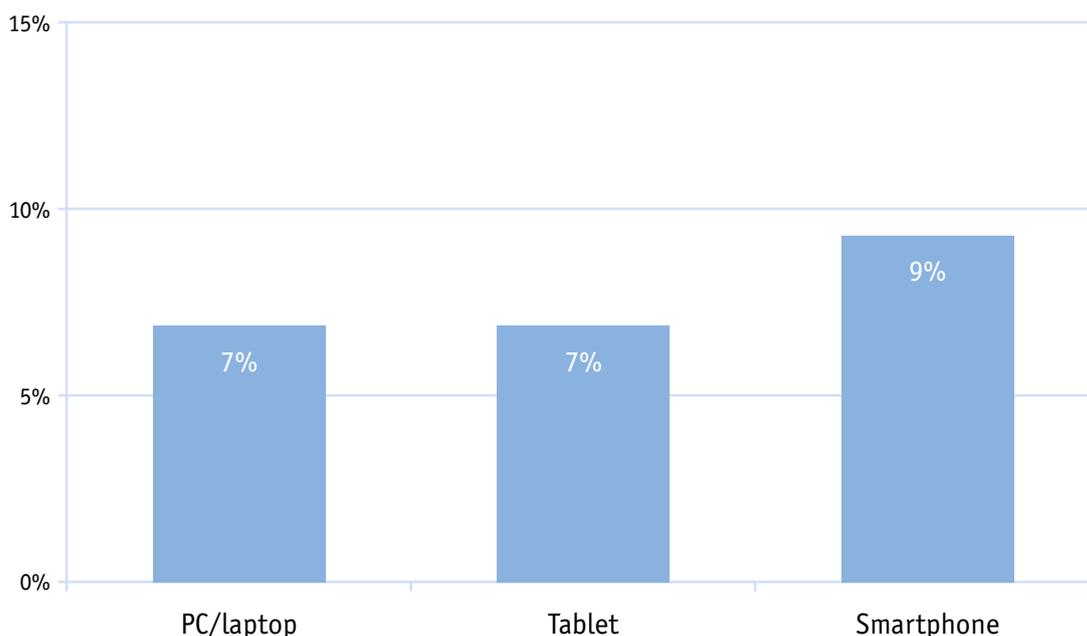
With LSYPE2, respondents were asked for their consent to link their survey responses to administrative data held by the Department for Education; 95% agreed to such data linkage. These records provide an external source of information we can use to validate the respondents' answers.

LSYPE2 respondents were asked for the number of GCSEs they had achieved at grades A*-C. For respondents who gave consent for data linkage, we were able to identify whether or not they had achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C from their linked education data. We were, therefore, able to see if respondents' answers were consistent with the official records.

Figure 3 shows this inconsistency rate among respondents completing by smartphone, tablet or PC/laptop. For 9% of smartphone respondents, the answer given in the survey didn't match the education records. There was no significant difference by device, however, after controlling for demographic differences.

Unlike Antoun et al (2017), therefore, we did not find any evidence of greater inaccuracy in self-reported information among respondents using smartphones.

Figure 3: Comparing self-reported GCSEs achieved to administrative data – inconsistency rates by device



Base: 1,603 (PC/laptop), 317 (tablet), 738 (smartphone)

Self-reported risky behaviours

Another indicator with relatively little existing research is the influence of device choice on responses to sensitive questions. Here, one hypothesis is that smartphone respondents may be less prone to social desirability bias given the more private nature of smartphones, in particular, the fact that phones are much less likely than larger devices to be shared with other people (Pelleg et al, 2013).

LSYPE2 respondents were asked whether or not they had taken part in certain risky behaviours: ever having smoked, excessive alcohol consumption in the last year and ever having used cannabis. Smartphone respondents were more likely than respondents completing by tablet or PC/laptop to say that they had done each of these things.

The same questions were also asked in the previous wave of LSYPE2, when all data was collected through face-to-face interviewing. To test for a device effect, we could, therefore, look at the **levels of change** between waves three and four: a significantly different degree of change for one group would indicate an effect associated with that device.

We conducted this analysis in two stages. First, we calculated a propensity score weight for PC/laptop and tablet respondents. This gave a higher weight to the respondents most similar to those who used a smartphone. The effect of the weight is to make the profiles of tablet and PC/laptop respondents as similar as possible to that of smartphone respondents. The propensity score weight controls not only for observed demographic differences (see table 1) but also for differences in behaviour observed at wave three, such as the frequency of watching television or of using social networking sites.

Second, using the propensity score weight, we compared the **difference in differences**: the amount of change between the two waves observed for the respondents who completed wave four by smartphone, tablet or PC/laptop.

Table 4 shows the level of change for each device group. The degree of change was very similar for smartphone respondents and PC/laptop respondents. In other words, the respondents who would complete wave four by smartphone were already more likely to admit to these behaviours at wave three, when all data collection

was conducted in person. The difference in reported behaviours at wave four is, therefore, likely to be due to differences in the kinds of respondents completing by each device (selection effects) rather than differences due to the device itself (measurement effects).

While no significant differences between smartphones and PCs/laptops were observed, there were significant differences between smartphones and tablets for cannabis use ($p < 0.01$) and smoking ($p = 0.049$). The differences between respondents using tablets and PCs/laptops were not significant however. Without a clear theory as to why there should be a difference between smartphones and tablets, but not PCs/laptops, we consider this fairly weak evidence of a device effect for tablets.

Table 4: Change in self-reported risky behaviours between waves three and four

	PC/laptop	Tablet	Smartphone
Ever smoked	9 ppt	7 ppt	11 ppt
Been really drunk in the last 12 months	13 ppt	10 ppt	12 ppt
Ever tried cannabis	7 ppt	4 ppt	10 ppt
Base	1,706	345	774

Conclusions

From our analysis, our principal conclusion is that there is little evidence that, among young people, the quality of data is any lower for smartphone respondents than respondents completing using other devices. Although break-off rates were higher than other devices, these were still very low, and the difference compared to other devices was small. Over the remaining indicators, no substantive difference for smartphones was observed.

Additionally, we find it encouraging that there was very little evidence of lower data quality despite the fact that relatively little work was conducted to optimise the survey for smartphones. If the difference in break-off rates – or any undetected smartphone differences – is in part due to the technical limitations of a small screen and a touchscreen interface, it ought to be possible for researchers to reduce these through careful survey design.

We therefore encourage researchers to design online surveys with small-screen devices primarily in mind whenever feasible. By keeping answer lists and question wording short (to minimise scrolling), and by making surveys easy to use and navigate on a small screen, researchers can minimise the risk of measurement effects resulting from device choice. Besides which, these principles are good practice for questionnaire design more generally.

While our findings are, no doubt, encouraging, the specific respondent group may well be more tolerant of differences in device. They are of an age-group that uses smartphones the most in daily life, and they are part of a longitudinal panel, having taken part in a similar survey three times before. We suspect that factors relating to questionnaire design will be more important for older respondent groups and, quite possibly, cross-sectional designs.

Finally, consistent with previous research, the types of respondent completing by smartphone on LSYPE2 wave four were quite different to the types of respondent using other devices. This is true even for a population in which smartphone use is very widespread. This emphasises the importance of catering to device preference to avoid excluding particular types of respondent. It also further underlines the importance of careful questionnaire design to minimise any differences in measurement. It is very difficult to untangle measurement and selection effects once data is collected.

Smartphones are now a fixture in online research in the UK, nowhere more so than among young people. We recommend that researchers enable respondents to complete online surveys using their device of choice to reduce any possible impact on response rates or survey representativeness. But researchers should also design surveys to work effectively on small-screen devices so as to minimise the risks of device-related measurement effects.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Longitudinal Studies team at the Department for Education for allowing us to share methodological data on this study.

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Map-making and walking interviews: a psycho-social approach to researching with male sex workers

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Abstract

This paper is based on initial reflections from a PhD study using map-making and walking interviews to investigate the everyday lives and experiences of male sex workers in Manchester. In it, we argue that using both methods together produces data which can contribute towards understanding the affective and sensory nature of these men's lives and identities, producing data which deliberately counters the reifying impulse of much of the research on men who sell sex. We propose that map-making and walking interviews offer psycho-social methods for engaging research participants through relational common activities, encouraging a certain camaraderie between the researcher and participant which minimises power-imbalances. The paper uses a case example to illustrate map-making and walking interviews as a method. The approach might help to broaden understanding of the experience of male sex workers, generating knowledge which can contribute towards social policy by questioning existing stereotyped assumptions.

Introduction

This paper is based on a PhD study which seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the daily lives and experiences of male sex workers in Manchester, exploring personal survival strategies as well as psychological and social processes which contribute to their vulnerability and marginalisation. Manchester is a city with a history of male sex work, with Atkins (2014) tracing projects offering support to male sex workers in Manchester since 2001. Traditionally, male sex work has involved street-based selling, centred around a two- to three-mile radius of Manchester's Gay Village. There is now a growing trend towards sex work being procured online (Goldring et al, 2016), although street-based selling is still prevalent in the city.

The research this paper is based on was conducted in partnership with The Men's Room, Manchester (TMR), a charity which has supported male sex workers since 2004. TMR is an arts and social care charity which engages an average of 40 male sex workers at any one time. It is the only such organisation in Manchester offering support to young men identifying as male sex workers. Using a non-judgemental approach, which focuses on the needs of the young men rather than their identity as male sex workers, TMR creates a normalising environment that enables young men in similar situations the opportunity to meet and share experiences. TMR also empowers the young men to self-select the level and extent of their engagement with the organisation, further enabling them to work at a pace appropriate to their own felt needs. TMR does not have a referral system, and, although other partner agencies signpost young men to TMR, most of the young men supported self-refer and get involved through recommendation by existing clients and/or direct contact with outreach workers. By moving through the city, workers are able to build knowledge about the lives, situations and needs of the young men, which is central to realising a relational and embodied form of practice and hence, the provision of care and support (Hall and Smith, 2013; Roy, 2017).

The study uses a methodology which draws on phenomenology, psycho-social approaches and the mobilities paradigm (O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010). The use of mobile methods in qualitative social science research is in the ascendancy (Anderson, 2004; Ferguson, 2014; Hall and Smith, 2013; O'Neill and Perivolaris, 2014; Roy et al, 2015; Spiney, 2015; Ross et al, 2009). Those who have employed mobile approaches emphasise the ways in which they engage research participants through movement, altering the research relationship (from face-to-face to side-by-side) and affording an explicit engagement in space and place. Clark and Emmel (2010) note how, in walking interviews, people interweave their individual lives and experiences with collective (social) memories, and Rendell (2006) notes the ways in which walking interviews also engage fantasy and the imagination.

'Through the act of walking new connections are made and re-made, physically and conceptually over time and through space. Public concerns and private fantasies, past events and future imaginings, are brought into the here and now, into a relationship that is both sequential and simultaneous. Walking is a way of at once discovering and transforming the city.' (Rendell, 2006: p.153)

The use of map-making in this research deliberately engages an artistic perception, with research participants encouraged to re-approach their daily lives, routes and routines through an associational mode of thinking. Ingold (2010a) argues that maps should be seen in their pre-cartographic sense, 'as an instrument for revealing the inner reality of the world, not as a representation of its outer surface' (p.204). In the research, map-making sessions offered a way to scaffold the beginnings of an enquiry as well as providing a means to consider routes for subsequent walks. Making maps enabled the symbolisation of imaginative and emotional material, producing data rich with visual and scenic references (Froggett et al, 2014).

Used together, map-making and walking interviews have offered a way to open up a dialogue and a space in which embodied knowledge, experience and memories can be brought into awareness and shared (O'Neill and McHugh, 2017). In this article, we discuss the methodological contribution that map-making and mobile methods can make to understanding the lives of male sex workers.

Methodology and method

TMR introduced potential research participants to the study, acting as a gatekeeper to the research. Young men were introduced to the researcher by a staff member from TMR, and this allowed them to find out more about the project and the process, and to make their own decisions about whether to participate. The study used an 'active consent' process, enabling participants to opt out of the project whenever they chose and without explanation. TMR was also involved in the risk assessment of routes for the walking tours. TMR staff were always notified of the times of the walking tours, and were available to provide support to participants following the interviews.

The researcher met with prospective participants individually to discuss the purpose of the research project. It was explained that the study was independent of TMR and was not an intervention. At the first meeting, the young men were given written information and the opportunity to ask questions and to clarify anything they did not understand. The researcher then met with them again after two weeks to answer any further questions and to find out if they wanted to take part. At this point, those who chose to take part were asked to sign consent forms, and the process of active consent was explained to them again. The information provided to the men conveyed TMR's independence from the research project, and indicated that a decision to participate or not participate in the research would not affect their access to TMR's services. Although no incentives were offered, the project maintained TMR's practice of offering the young men a £5 supermarket voucher following participation in creative sessions.

The researcher maintained contact with each participant by SMS text message and/or telephone calls, and used this approach to arrange meetings at mutually agreed times and venues.

The researcher had previously worked for TMR in a support role, and knew some of the men from this previous work. It was, therefore, important for participants to understand the researcher's new role, and to appreciate how it was different and independent from his previous role. The researcher was also conscious of the

emotional conflict of managing a different role. The role conflicts of being a practising social worker, operating as a researcher in an organisation in which he had previously been an engagement worker, were complex. The partnership with TMR allowed him to talk through issues with staff, and the separate de-briefing and discussion with the supervisory team at the university offered another important space to think things through.

Phase 1: map-making

In the first phase, participants were asked to think of locations that were important to them, and to make maps of these. They then mapped out the route of the walks on these maps. People were given the freedom to draw whichever sort of map they chose and, in different interviews, the maps took different forms: some being list-like, and others pictorial or cartographical. These maps were copied and both the participant and researcher kept a copy. The maps became a reference point for the subsequent walks, and the men could redraw or revisit the maps at any point in the research. One young man declined to draw a map, and another drew a new set of maps six months after the end of the walking interviews.

Phase 2: walking interviews

Participants were asked to lead the researcher on a walk, or series of walks. On each walk, participants selected locations from the maps and decided which ones they would walk to as part of the interview.

Eleven walking interviews were completed with three participants over a six-month period. In this paper, we focus on the maps and walks made with Eddy¹, to illustrate the forms of data which can be produced by this way of working.

Findings

Case example: Eddy's maps and walks

Eddy is one of the three young men who participated in the initial phase of the research project.

Eddy identified his locations, and he and the researcher made a first map to guide the subsequent walking interviews. Eddy identified five locations that he wanted to visit, asking the researcher to write these on a piece of paper (figure 1), and to form these into a map (figure 2). Over a six-month period, Eddy led six walking interviews, including two tours of the same location. All five of the locations were within a mile's radius of Manchester's Gay Village. In the original map, Eddy had directed the researcher to link the locations with arrows, directionally depicting the order of the proposed walking interviews. In this map, Eddy also placed himself at the centre of the five locations. Hence the map seems to signal different forms of connectedness between Eddy and the locations, both biographical and more explicitly related to sex work. However, the actual walking interviews did not follow the sequence suggested in the original map.

¹ Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of individuals.

Figure 1: Locations

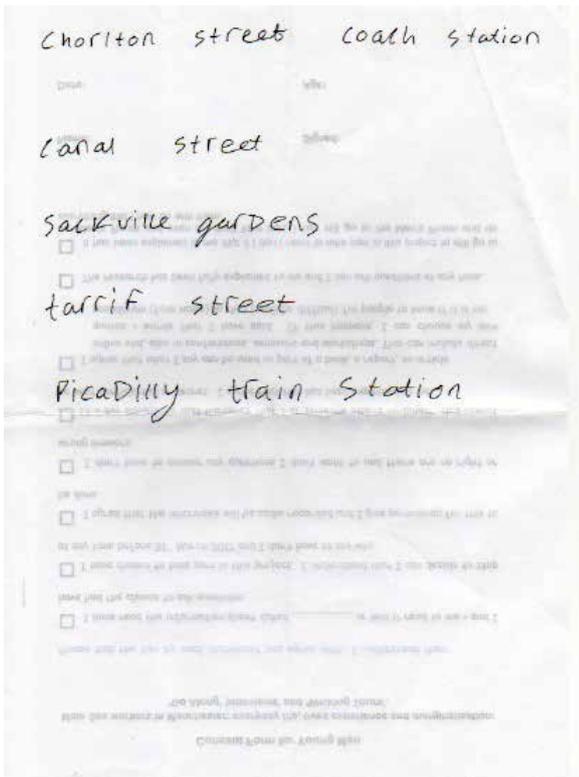
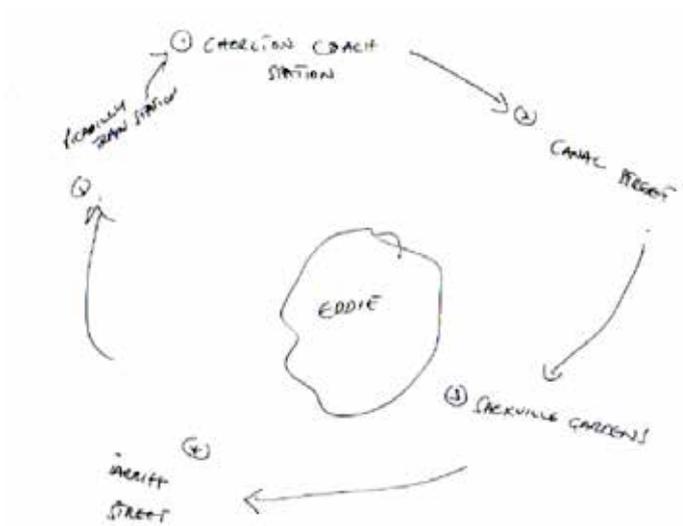


Figure 2: Map 1



Walk 1: Canal Street

The first walking interview commenced on Canal Street, which is generally accepted as the centre of Manchester's Gay Village, and is lined with bars and restaurants. Canal Street is often busy with pedestrian traffic, and is a popular place for socialising and partying. One section of Canal Street looks across Sackville Gardens, which is another of the locations which Eddy chose.

The researcher met Eddy at the Minshull Street-end of Canal Street at lunchtime. The streets were busy with pedestrian traffic as people were either taking, or returning from, their lunch breaks. There were a few people enjoying drinks outside the cafes and restaurants, and the researcher imagined that he and Eddy looked like two friends or work colleagues walking up and down the street, occasionally stopping when something struck Eddy and he paused to comment on it.

Eddy described how he had chosen this location as the first site because it was central to the first time he sold sex. One end of Canal Street meets Minshull Street where Manchester Crown Court is situated. Eddy described how, in preparing for a court appearance, he found himself on Canal Street by chance, and this was when someone first propositioned him to sell sex. However, in the following exchange, Eddy conveys a powerful sense of feeling wanted, and this seems important to his decision at the time, and to his relationship to sex work more broadly.

Researcher: So, you have chosen today for us to walk up and down Canal Street ...

Eddy: Yeah, this is where it all started. ... So, before I knew where I was, because I was due at court, I decided the night before to come down so I was here; to fall asleep outside the court and get up early the next morning, but it didn't work out that way. So, I come down here, and that's when I first got asked. ... Out of the 20 or 30 lads that were out at the time, someone had chosen me. Someone decided that they wanted **me** rather than the other lads... (bold text indicates emphasis in the expression)

Eddy presents his story in a factual, almost rehearsed manner. His familiarity with the story suggests it is one he has lived with and possibly told before. However, there are also elements of it which feel less rehearsed, and the effect of walking down Canal Street again seems to transport him back to that first night. He then talks about the death of his fiancé, and a sexual attack they were subjected to.

Researcher: ...you didn't particularly come here to look for sex work, so what made you decide to say yes to that first person who...?

Eddy: Money, and that way I didn't have to go hungry, I didn't have to sit on street corners begging for money. I've never been a beggar, I have always been, I worked for my things.

Researcher: Any other reason?

Eddy: To be honest with you, I had just lost me boyfriend cos me and Aaron were just more than just fucking homeless together. We used to sit at the street corners with a blanket over our head and before long we started engaging sexually. And then... And then ... the rape happened.

Eddy presents making money as an important consideration in his decision to sell sex. Although he describes his entry into sex work as happening by chance, he is also keen to convey personal pride in his financial independence, in the sense that he provides for himself. However, the quote below communicates a doubled or trebled aspect to his relationship to sex work. The value he takes from the sense of feeling wanted (he also describes how he always shaves and looks his best in order to keep his punters), and of providing for himself, sits alongside strong feelings that he is exploited by punters and shame that this is the way he provides for himself, a theme he picks up later in the walk.

Eddy: Since I started escorting, I've tried to leave it many times but I can't. I don't always like it, feel great about myself, but I can't help it if people still want me.

Walk 2: Chorlton Street car park

The second walking interview took place three weeks later. Eddy met the researcher near to Chorlton Street car park, which is less than five minutes' walk from Canal Street and Sackville Gardens. Eddy arrived holding his own voice recorder, which he said he used as a diary to record his appointments so he didn't forget them. The car park is attached to the Chorlton Street coach station, one of the most central in Manchester. Eddy met the researcher at the bus stop across the street from the coach station. When they crossed the road, they were unable to enter the multi-storey car park because they didn't have a ticket.

Eddy had re-arranged this second interview three times, cancelling for hospital appointments and what he described as his deteriorating mental health. It was no surprise that the subject of mental health was central to the conversation on this walk. Eddy told a vivid story about his mental health issues, explaining that he was being supported by the community mental health team.

Eddy: See! This place now, it has a lot of bad memories, the amount of times I have been at the top at the wrong side and something stopped me jumping.

Researcher: When you say, you were on the wrong side ...

Eddy: I didn't see any purpose to life ... I used to have like regular dreams that I would go out and it would be like, I would be sat there with blood over all me hands and like, it would be like I'd stabbed someone or something like and I would be like 'fucking hell'. I mean, how many people have dreams stabbing someone?

Researcher: I don't know of anybody who's told me that, so I don't think it's a very common thing.

Eddy: Yeah! I got to the point where I lost all hope; I give up on life; it was like life give up on me like, I mean the other night, I started thinking of (names a partner from a previous relationship) and that's when things hit a head and that's when I decided I was coming back here to my partner's; I got the key to the medicine cabinet, so I went there, got the morphine, came here, and my intention was, climb up, take the morphine and jump over; I will be drunk, dead before I even hit the ground.

During the walk, Eddy made several references to the time he had spent in mental health wards, his use of other people's prescription drugs and his difficult relationships with health professionals. The car park appeared to be central to Eddy's struggles with his mental health, and it is suggested that he particularly chose this location for this walk because of his concerns about his mental health at the time. Eddy described how he had attempted to commit suicide at the car park. However, he also described how it had been a sort of home for him, suggesting that something in the concrete and metal facades of the car park, in the sense of being able to get physically above his ground-level struggles, had provided him with a space of containment, allowing him to cope with some very difficult emotions in the absence of human support (Roy, 2017).

Researcher: Do you still come here quite often?

Eddy: Yeah! I used to be here all the time. I used to be here **all** the time. This street used to be my home. So, when I was homeless, I used to sleep on the third floor and night time, I'd venture up to the fourth floor and stand there watching about and it looked like people were just like ants init, acting like silly, got few free beers and stuff.

Eddy's challenges with homelessness and his own mental health were complex and included periods when he chose to sleep at the car park because he could not bring himself to return to the flat where his partner had committed suicide.

Walk 3: Sackville Gardens

The third walk was to Sackville Gardens which borders Canal Street and is also next to Shena Simon campus, part of the Manchester College where TMR held its drop-in sessions for male sex workers at one time. Sackville Gardens is home to the statue of Alan Turing, an iconic figure for many LGBT people who identify with the discrimination and persecution he encountered because of his sexuality. It is also home to the 'Beacon of Hope', a memorial for people living with HIV and AIDS and lives lost to it. Vigils are held here on World AIDS Day and to close the annual Manchester Pride Festival. It was at the Beacon of Hope that the researcher found Eddy sitting and waiting for the third walk. It had been three months since the last interview during which time Eddy had been in hospital, sectioned under the Mental Health Act. Following discussions with both Eddy and TMR which supported Eddy during this period of mental ill-health, it was agreed that he was mentally, emotionally and physically ready for the third interview.

As the researcher walked into the gardens from the college border, he could see Eddy seated and waiting. He looked relaxed and almost excited. The conversation turned to why this location was important and why he had chosen it for this walk.

Eddy: I mean don't get me wrong, I've been attacked here several times, **here**, but this is still home for me.

Researcher: Here! This place, Sackville Gardens? I was going to come on to that, what does this place mean to you?

Eddy: Hope! It brings hope to me.

Researcher: In what way? When you say 'hope. It brings hope to me', what do you mean, can you explain that a little bit more?

Eddy: Because it's like, I've come from this place here and yet I've managed to get back on my feet and get back out there. I've managed to secure a flat. I mean, yeah, me health is still not well, [but I have] managed to secure a property, I'm working on my medication...

Eddy discusses some very low periods, when he has been a victim of arson and rape as well as discrimination from other male sex workers and the police, describing how he sometimes saw custody as a safe haven. When Eddy talks about 'hope', his eyes are animated and passionate as if he is looking for something to cling on to. Eddy goes on to discuss the mechanics of male sex work as a job, but one gets the sense of his deep-seated desire for companionship, which he looked for in other relationships, and how he feels both tied to this work and also exploited by it. He also describes the lower prices he charges for his services compared to what he calls the 'going rate'.

Researcher: What would you do if you walk in here, in those days or even now, what would be the usual thing you would do ... sat here or?

Eddy: We normally just sit here, wait for a punter to approach you, and you usually [get] quite a good deal out of it down here ... especially Friday or Saturday night.

Researcher: So would the people still come here looking, would they still pay for sex if they can't get the free ones?

Eddy: Nah! Occasionally, you got, one punter brings out 20 quid and he'll buy himself something to drink and something to eat and you get the change ... So, no matter how much you spend, so you could end up with 15 quid for a shag. That's how, that's how much people sort of downgrade you, you need that money and you sat there thinking, hang on there, I need the money, you've got access to it but yet you [are] sort of spending it even before you get it. So ... if you've got a shit night or you're just cold and want to get in someone's car and have the heating on for a bit and to have someone downgrading you by giving you just 15 quid ... [when the] normal charging rates is 20 quid upwards.

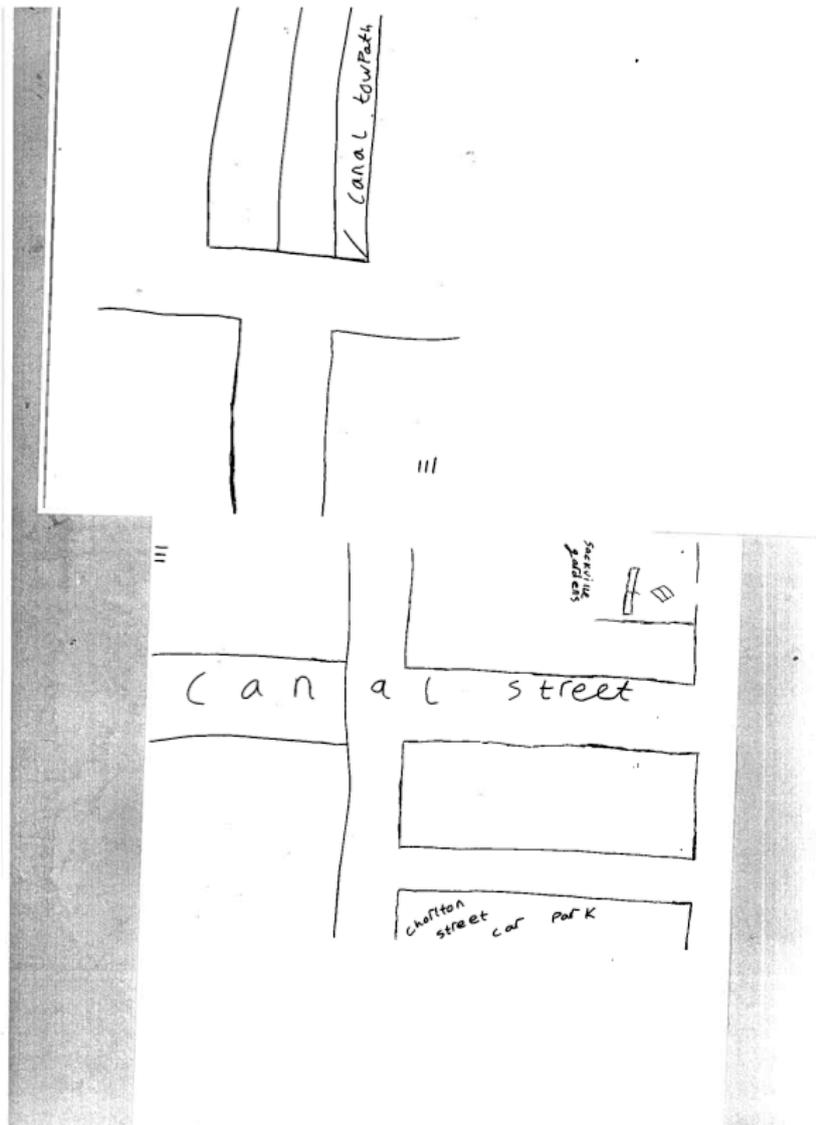
Most lads charge 30 quid for a blow job and 40 quid for ... full-on sex whereas I just charge 20 quid for a blow job and 30 quid for full-on sex.

Final interview

Six months after the end of the walking interviews, the researcher met with Eddy in a café in south Manchester, eight miles away from where the walking interviews had taken place. Eddy began the session by discussing the original maps, and said that he would like to complete a second map. On this occasion, over coffee, he drew new maps whilst reflecting on his frustrations that he would be anonymised in the research. He talked at length about how unhappy he was about this, saying he wanted to share his own story and also to eulogise his ex-fiancé whose suicide contributed to his decision to become a sex worker. Eddy's new maps offered a more conventional cartographical representation of each of the locations (see example in figure 3).

In this example, Eddy has placed two of the maps together, capturing the locations of the first three walking tours (Canal Street, Sackville Gardens and Chorlton Street car park), all close together and connected by Canal Street. In the interview, Eddy pushed the maps together on the table, continuing on another sheet. The way in which Eddy drew the maps separately and then linked them together seems to indicate how he sees the locations as both separate and connected. These three separate locations appear to be connected through Eddy's experiences as a sex worker; how this began on Canal Street; the day-to-day mechanics of getting by in sex work; and his hope for a better life represented by Sackville Gardens.

Figure 3: Map 2



Case summary

Through Eddy's maps and walks, we are able to experience with him, how he became a sex worker, aspects of his everyday life, and how his feelings about himself and his work contribute to his ongoing sense of vulnerability, exploitation and marginalisation. Eddy said that he had been a sex worker for about four or five years, and has been involved on and off with TMR. He described male sex workers as 'providing a service', and said he would 'continue to be a sex worker for as long as he is needed'. He also presented a kind of bravado, which cast him as the protector of more vulnerable sex workers and under-age care home runaways, something that has been reported in previous research with male sex workers (Roy et al, 2015). There's a sense in which this notion of protection may be imagined, or desired, as much as it might be real, but it also, perhaps, is indicative of the ground-level, informal kinds of support that young men like Eddy value (Hughes et al, 2014). In previous work on men and mental health, a sense of supporting one another through personal difficulties was a central way in which some disenfranchised men were able to rediscover a sense of their own agency, and to begin to enact self-care (Spandler et al, 2014). In Eddy's case, whether desired or real, this sense of being able to act in the interest of others may be an important bridge to self-care, and important for a young man who experiences intense personal vulnerability in his own life, an ambivalent relationship to services and a complex relationship to sex work.

Discussion

In this research, map-making and walking interviews were intended to provide different ways in which young men involved in sex work could re-approach, observe, reflect on and narrate their own lives and experiences. The process of the map-making mirrored the process of the walking interviews in which the work became a continuous improvisation, created in the moment, as the young men walked the researcher through the landscape of their lives. The approach follows the impetus of Ingold (2010b:97), who argues for a reversal of the hylomorphic model of creation, refuting the idea that art unfolds a preconceived idea with an original intention, and suggesting the artist invites the viewer to walk with them and to see their world as it unfolds in the art. Making the maps with Eddy provided a common base for initiating the walking discussions, and the first maps served as provocations for the walking interviews that followed. Eddy's maps are packed with emotional, social and cultural reference points, holding open the space between his own creative intentions, and the meanings that become attached to them through the interviews and subsequent analysis (Froggett and Trustram, 2014).

It may be relevant that the locations in Eddy's maps are all different. The first map preceded the six walking interviews, and the final maps were drawn six months after the last interview. The first map was drawn at the offices of TMR while the final ones were drawn at a cafe some eight miles away. With the first map, Eddy asked the researcher to write down the five locations whilst suggesting the sequence for the proposed walks. His engagement with the idea of map-making was minimal and perfunctory then, and it was possible that he was apprehensive or unsure of its purpose. The final maps were made at a different time, six months later, and in a different place, physically removed from the world of male sex work which formed the basis of the six walking interviews. By this stage, Eddy also knew the researcher much better, and felt more comfortable with him.

We find several things interesting about this final interview. First, that Eddy makes his agenda clear. He wants to use this final session to draw new maps. This, in itself, suggests that he sees the maps as important to the work, albeit for reasons we can only glimpse at this stage. In making these later maps, Eddy deliberated over the process, making separate maps for each location. Making these final maps also gave him the opportunity to discuss a subject he had been unable to talk about before: his unhappiness at having to remain anonymous in the research. It's also interesting that he chooses to draw a series of maps, and then to link some of these on the table and through the conversation. This decision rather cleverly defuses any possibility that the researcher might see the maps as a single object or (through analysis) make them into one. In this way, Eddy ensures that the maps must remain 'a thing that is vitalized by its bundle of' personal narrative connections and threads rather than an object that has a single designation' (Back, 2007 cites Heidegger).

The walking interviews provided a space in which the researcher could explore with Eddy, over a period of months, his life and identity as a sex worker. The sequence set out in Eddy's first map was indicative, and the actual locations visited in the walks reflected his concerns at the time of the walk. For instance, during a particularly vulnerable period, when Eddy had spent some time in a mental health facility, he chose a location that symbolised hope to him, whereas at another time, he chose a location that enabled him to discuss his challenges with homelessness and his daily strategies for managing. In the subsequent walks, the physical infrastructure, sounds, imagery and the people in the locations invoked and shaped the narratives that Eddy shared in a way that could not have been predicted or directed. Pink and Morgan (2013: 353) argue that such methods require researchers to 'intervene in people's lives in new ways that are intensive, [and] potentially intrusive ...'. We concur with this view, whilst also arguing that the methods have allowed for a meaningful exploration of the ways in which Eddy's social, psychological and embodied worlds are intertwined; one that he engages with and values; and which generates new knowledge about male sex work. In previous research using walking tours with vulnerable young men, Roy and Froggett (2016) observe:

'... it became clear that we were providing a setting and context in which unconscious and unarticulated aspects of the relationship between the young men and the city could be enacted. We noted that many of the routes through the city had been intentionally chosen and the men had often considered stories they might tell related to the sites visited so that they were able to offer pre-crafted narratives. However, both the stories, and sometimes also the intended routes, altered as the interviews developed. It appeared that the city and the interviewees worked on each other, so that other stories and ways of telling them emerged. Sometimes impressions, sensations, scenes, feelings and fragments of experience came spontaneously to the fore without being crafted into a narrative form.'

Researching male sex workers through map-making and walking interviews has enabled an exploration of some of the difficult choices which confront marginalised young people; the complex motivations for engaging in sex work; and the psychological and social processes which can lead people to feel attached or tied to this work. The approach has allowed the researcher to discuss interconnecting issues such as mental health, poverty, self-esteem and discrimination and how these contribute to and reinforce Eddy's vulnerability and marginalisation. Using map-making and walking interviews as a method has allowed participants to share their personal, often intimate, biographic narratives. As this case study shows, the method enabled Eddy to tell his own story, which he might otherwise have found difficult.

Some would question whether the idiosyncrasy of Eddy's case might limit its use in developing new understandings of male sex work. We argue that looking at Eddy's life in detail sheds light on the web of processes which influenced his view of sex work, his decision to begin selling sex, how sex work related to other parts of his life, and the potential of finding a life beyond it. There are many other questions which cannot be answered by the data, and much more that could be said about Eddy on the basis of it. We think that, despite acknowledged problems and limitations, working with single cases can add depth to standard sociological explanations. As O'Neill and McHugh (2017) argue, mobile phenomenological approaches allow us to 'experience meaning making on the move that enhances awareness of the relationship, between private troubles, biography and societal relationships and structures'. As we analyse other cases, we hope to build a richer picture.

Conclusion

Recent studies of male sex work have evidenced problems of depression, low educational achievement, unemployment, homelessness and poor housing, substance misuse, risk-taking behaviour and sexual behaviour, poor health as well as current and recent history of involvement with the criminal justice system (McNeil, 2010; Fendrich et al, 2013; Tobin et al, 2013; Wang et al, 2013; Koblin, et al, 2013; Deiss et al, 2013; Atkins, 2014; Tobin et al, 2014). For example, Atkins (2014) concludes that male sex workers present with an 'ecology of needs', highlighting male sex workers as 'a group' predisposed to missing out on support due to their severe or multiple disadvantage.

Whilst such findings seem to provide useful information, we concur with Iris Marion Young, who refers to the ways in which some research involves a ‘totalizing impulse’ in which the findings seem to straightjacket people by the communities they are defined as being a part of (cited in Back, 2007: 57). We argue that understanding what influences, and gives expression to, male sex workers’ daily lives, can contribute to developing better models of support, by broadening public understanding of the experience of male sex workers. In this article, we make a case for the possibilities of generating new data about male sex workers through a methodology which deliberately prioritises a commitment to open up a space for dialogue with a group of young men who are often discussed but seldom heard.

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Evaluating Holiday Kitchen: capturing children's perspectives on a summer holiday food and activities programme

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of a range of innovative methods to collect children's responses as part of a wider evaluation of a summer holiday food and activity programme in the West Midlands. The issues of children's voice and children's participation were central to the evaluation design, and the article critically reflects on the creative techniques used to achieve this. The article concludes that, although difficulties were encountered in the evaluation, the use of multiple, creative methods in researching children's experiences is a valuable approach that allows the collection of rich data. It also offers complementary insights and understandings that may be difficult to access through reliance on more traditional methods of data collection.

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The full evaluation report: 'O'Connor, J., Wolhuter, C. and Every, S. (2014) An evaluation of Holiday Kitchen 2014: learning, food and play for families who need it most in the West Midlands' is at: www.family-action.org.uk

Introduction

Consistent with the paradigm of childhood as a social construction (James and Prout, 2014) and drawing on the theoretical traditions of children's rights (Jones and Welch, 2010) and children's agency (Christensen, 2008), it is now widely accepted that children should be given the opportunity to participate in research that involves them, and to be given a voice.

This article is a contribution to the growing resource of critical accounts of data collection tools that have been devised to facilitate participatory research with young children (for example Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Street et al, 2016; Lipponen, 2016). It reports on a range of innovative methods which were used as part of an evaluation to collect the views of children aged eight and under who attended a summer holiday food and activities programme in the West Midlands in 2014.

Background to the project

Holiday Kitchen aims to provide ‘holiday learning, food and play for families who need it most’ in recognition that, for many vulnerable and low-income families, nursery and school holiday periods are a time of stress and indebtedness. It has the following core objectives:

1. Improve family nutrition and wellbeing
2. Improve social inclusion and aspiration
3. Reduce financial and emotional strain

For the purposes of the evaluation, these objectives were related to a series of outcomes identified within a theory of change model whereby multiple short-, medium- and long-term outcomes and related indicators were identified for key stakeholder groups including families, staff, volunteers and funders. These indicators then informed the design and development of the data collection methods used in the evaluation. The short-, medium- and long-term aims for children participating in Holiday Kitchen are shown below:

Table 1: Short-, medium- and long-term aims for children in Holiday Kitchen from theory of change model

Short-term aims for children	Medium-term aims for children	Long-term aims for children
Increased physical activity	Improved wellbeing	Reduced obesity amongst children
Improved opportunities for family bonding and learning outside the home	Raised aspirations (through diversity of experience)	Reduced health and education inequalities
Improved nutrition/improved family knowledge of nutrition	Safeguarding – avoidance of crisis point/increased safety of children	Improved educational outcomes

The programme required families to commit to eight half-days of Holiday Kitchen activities spread across two to four weeks of the summer holidays. In all, 302 families participated in the 2014 Holiday Kitchen, spread over 12 community settings including nine children’s centres and one domestic violence refuge. In line with the project aim of supporting those most in need, the evaluation data gathered from the adult participants showed that all of the participants were unemployed; all but one were receiving at least one type of state benefit; 45% of participants came from ethnic minority backgrounds; 67% said that their school-aged child/ren accessed free school meals; and 34% said their family had accessed foodbank support in the last 12 months.

In order to ensure further funding was available for the project, it was necessary for an independent evaluation of Holiday Kitchen to be carried out to assess whether or not it met its objectives and the extent to which there was evidence for the theory of change which underpinned the programme.

Methodology

The Holiday Kitchen evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to draw out the child voice, and the adult voice of families, staff, volunteers and commissioners/funders. This article discusses only the methods relating to the children. Capturing children’s perspectives was essential to the evaluation programme in order to verify the accuracy of the theory of change model, and also to gather robust data to provide evidence of the impact of the Holiday Kitchen programme from the viewpoint of the primary beneficiaries.

Across the evaluation activities there was a focus on understanding what children ‘usually’ eat in the holidays; gathering data about whether they were eating more healthily whilst attending Holiday Kitchen; and whether they anticipated that there would be any ongoing change after having completed the programme.

Designing the evaluation materials

Bespoke evaluation tools and materials were designed to use with the children and families with the underlying ethos that all techniques should be visual, inclusive, participatory and community-led. The aim was that there should be no dominant voices across the evaluation activities, and that there would be many and varied opportunities for all voices to be heard. The evaluation tools were originally piloted and developed by Planning for Real, an organisation with expertise in community engagement and a track record of engaging with all sections (and ages) of communities. The tools used were informed by techniques that Planning for Real had used successfully with children as part of community engagement projects, and these were refined to be appropriate for the age range at Holiday Kitchen.

Given that most of the children attending were aged under eight, the intention was to develop clear, effective and fun evaluation materials which could fit into the daily activities as opposed to being time consuming and confusing ‘add-ons’. The intention was that each activity should take no longer than five to ten minutes and that, where possible, should be incorporated into the activity so it felt less like a standalone exercise. There was some feedback from staff that the evaluation, on the first day in particular, was quite time intensive, and this was taken into account in later iterations of Holiday Kitchen in which the initial evaluations were explained and undertaken more quickly. The aim was for the older children within the age range to engage in the evaluation activities independently, and for younger children to be able to voice their ideas and thoughts and to be supported by an adult to record their views.

In all, five evaluation activities were designed for, and used with, the children. 238 children aged under eight contributed to at least one of the evaluation activities. As evident in the table below, two of them, ‘tree of hope’ and ‘washing line’, were used on day one at the start of Holiday Kitchen, with data from thought and speech bubbles, weather map and food evaluation being collected every day.

Table 2: Schedule of daily themes and evaluation activities

Day	Daily theme	Children’s evaluation activity
1	Adventure stories, drama and craft	Tree of hope Washing line
2	Change for life – get active day	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation
3	Money fun and games	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation
4	Field to fork	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation
5	Local trip	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation
6	Make and taste	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation
7	Forest school fun	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation
8	Music, dance and celebration	Thought and speech bubbles Weather map Food evaluation

The intention behind using the same evaluation tools on a daily basis was that the children would become familiar with the activities and, hopefully, more confident about expressing their views. This is in line with recommendations from researchers who use the Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2011) in gathering the views of young children. For example, Street et al (2016) highlight the importance of multiple visits in their fieldwork with under-fives in order to build rapport and maximise children's engagement in research activities. Using the same tools on a daily basis also made the evaluation programme more manageable for the delivery staff who were on site and tasked with organising the evaluation activities and collecting the data following a pre-project training session. The data collected was both quantitative and qualitative and was analysed from both these perspectives. For example, the number of unhappy rainclouds and happy suns from the weather maps was counted after a day's activities, and any written or reported comments were recorded, coded and collated. In this way, it was possible to gather an overall picture of children's responses to an activity, and also to explore and try to understand the reasons behind these views.

Tree of hope



This evaluation activity was designed for both children and parents/carers. At the start of the first day, all participants were asked about their hopes and expectations of the Holiday Kitchen and specifically, their views on what they would like to get out of attending. The 'tree of hope' was a piece of cloth attached to the wall with a freehand outline of a tree drawn onto it. Children were asked to write, or be supported by a parent/carer or staff member who could write for them, their responses/thoughts on the fruit symbols and stick them to the tree. Adults were asked to write their responses on leaves and to stick these to the tree.

The action of sticking the fruit symbol to the tree enabled all children, irrespective of their age, to get involved in the activity, and it was particularly successful at engaging the very youngest children. Although many children were unable to write independently, their parents/carers and staff supported them to contribute their thoughts. The brightly coloured fruit symbols were vibrant and easily identifiable with the intention of attracting children and making them feel included and central to the activity.

Children's main aims in attending (collected using the tree) were to make new friends, to do new activities and, above all, to have fun. Comments included: 'Having fun with food, running round and getting messy', 'I like to do adventures', 'I like to meet some people and I do some games', 'I would like to do drawing and colouring', 'Going to the park, colouring, play' and 'I would like to bake chocolate cake'.

Children appreciated the creative and interactive elements of this evaluation activity. They were able to understand and respond to the question posed (particularly the older children) and children across the age range enjoyed physically sticking the templates to the trees.

Washing line



The washing line activity was designed specifically for children with the aim of gathering their views about school holidays and trying to understand more about their own experiences of holiday times. Participating children were asked to write down (or be supported to record their thoughts by a parent/carer or member of staff) on brightly coloured 'pants' and 'tops' symbols, their views on what they considered to be 'tops' (great) or 'pants' (horrible, not good) about school holidays. As with the tree of hope and all other children's evaluation activities, participants were not required to put their names on their responses, as the evaluation team thought that participants would feel more comfortable with the activity and would contribute greater depth of response if they were anonymous. All centres were provided with string for the washing line and pegs so the children could physically hang up the completed symbols on the washing line.

The aim of this activity was to gain a sense of children's views about holidays before they attended the Holiday Kitchen programme, and to gather information about their 'usual' experience of holidays. The intention was for the washing line to be filled during the first day of the programme, and for the 'full' washing line to remain on display in the delivery setting for the duration.

The responses were mixed, as is to be expected when negative options are made available to respondents, and also reflecting the varied experiences the children had had of school holiday periods. Some children said they liked holidays because they liked spending time with family and friends, playing with toys and not having to go to school ('I like holidays because I don't have to learn', 'I like school holidays because I get to spend time with mum') with others feeling bored and missing school and their friends with nothing to do ('I hate staying home', 'I miss school a little').

This activity generated a great deal of information on children's typical experiences of holidays providing a baseline so the evaluation team could better understand the 'starting point' of participants' journeys.

Thought and speech bubbles

Each day of the Holiday Kitchen programme included a different 'keep learning and take notice' activity. These were based on their value in supporting Holiday Kitchen's three core objectives.

For each daily 'keep learning and take notice' session, the activity leader asked children for their thoughts before and after the activity. The aim was to gain an understanding of what children already knew about each topic before the session began, and to gauge whether and what children had learnt during the session. The speech and thought bubbles were designed to capture evidence on the extent to which children had increased exposure to reading and language development (school readiness). The indicator used to measure the achievement of this outcome was the number of children reporting learning and new words/concepts from the daily activities.

As part of the introduction to the session, the activity leader prompted the children for their views on the topic, asking for example: 'What do you know about making a healthy lunch?' Immediately after the session children were asked: 'What new words and ideas have you learnt today?' Responses at the beginning and end of the session were noted down by children on post-it notes (and by parents/carers or staff if support was required) and stuck onto the large speech and thought bubbles which were displayed on the wall.

Unsurprisingly, this evaluation activity was notably more successful for the older children in the age range. This was due to a number of factors including: the inability of the majority of pre-school children to write independently; the level of speech development of younger participants; the language difficulties faced by some of the children and their parents/carers; and the lack of a dual language facility.

However, this evaluation activity generated a great deal of data which provided evidence of the achievement of the outcome for each activity. Children involved in the 'make and taste' activities reported learning new words such as 'tangerine', 'avocado', 'kiwi'; new knowledge such as 'blueberries are different to blackberries'; and new skills such as 'how to core and cut a pineapple'. The 'field to fork' activity enabled the children to learn and try new things about food and nutrition including, 'carrots grow under the ground', 'tried green beans they nice', 'some food grows on trees and some in ground', 'basil smells minty' and 'you have to plant a seed to get a flower and then it grows into food'. The learning from the 'money fun and games' session included the difference between a want and a need: 'Needs and wants are different. Look at what you have then see what you need', 'Money is kept safe in a bank' and 'How to spend money better'.

These activities were intended to lead to engagement with wider social support services if needed, and to provide information about where families could get advice about money.

This activity worked best when facilitators and frontline staff had attended the evaluation training or had been fully briefed about the evaluation programme in advance. Before the Holiday Kitchen programme began, staff (including frontline staff and managers/facilitators) were invited to a session about the evaluation resources so they could understand the premise for the approach; see and experiment with the resources/tools; and become familiar with how to incorporate each of the activities into the daily sessions. It was evident in the feedback from staff that those who attended the evaluation session were more positive about the evaluation approach and tools than those who did not attend, and were more aware of the wider context and the purpose of gathering the detailed data. The initial 'thought' bubble was intended to be part of the introduction, and the 'speech' bubble as part of the 'rounding up' of the session. Taking just a couple of minutes to explore these questions generated a great deal of information, and asking children directly about their knowledge and encouraging them to actively take part by sticking their responses on to the bubbles was a successful approach.

As the speech and thought bubbles activity took place daily, most participating children became increasingly familiar and enthusiastic with what they were being asked to do, although some complained that the repetition of this evaluation method was boring.

Weather maps



The 'weather map' is an evaluation tool which can be used across age ranges to review how people are feeling or how much progress has been made. This is a tool developed by Planning for Real, and used with both adults and children. For the Holiday Kitchen, this was simplified to involve only the sun and raincloud symbols. At the end of each day, participating children were asked to record how they felt about the day by choosing rainclouds or sun symbols (or both), writing (or being supported to do so) their comments, and sticking them to the weather map. Children chose sun symbols for aspects they liked, and raincloud symbols for aspects they were not so keen on.

For children who could write independently, this evaluation activity was successful. For younger children, parents/carers and staff were on hand to note down their likes and dislikes. All children were able to get involved by choosing their symbols and sticking them to the maps.

A large amount of data about many aspects of the Holiday Kitchen programme was gathered through this evaluation activity. Children were given free range to provide feedback on any part of the day. Adopting this 'unprompted' approach was beneficial for the quality of data gathered, and in enabling the evaluation team to gain a better understanding about the children's true perceptions of the best and worst parts of each day of the programme.

Staff commented on how participating children quickly grasped this daily evaluation activity; how they liked the materials; and how, irrespective of their age, they enjoyed getting involved in sticking the weather symbols onto the cloth. For pre-verbal children, this was the activity about which they were most enthusiastic, picking up on the difference between sun and raincloud symbols and showing a keenness to engage, demonstrating how even very young children can engage with research and articulate their feelings to researchers in a meaningful manner when data collection tools are sympathetically designed.

Comments on the sun symbols included: 'I really liked that breakfast this morning' and 'I liked eating my healthy pizza'. Raincloud comments included: 'How hot the day was to exercise' and 'We didn't like the rain' and 'I didn't like to get covered in mud' on the forest school day.

Findings

All delivery venues were responsible for gathering their own data, and then submitting it for analysis at the end of the programme to Accord and Birmingham City University. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and the qualitative data was collated and coded according to the key themes of the evaluation.

In light of the findings from the evaluation materials, it was clear that Holiday Kitchen met the following short-term aims for children which stemmed from the three core objectives of the theory of change model:

- Increased physical activity
- Improved opportunities for family bonding and learning outside the home
- Improved nutrition

Evidence from the children, parents and staff indicated that the medium-term goals for children of 'improved wellbeing' and 'raised aspirations (through diversity of experience)' were achieved, particularly through the outdoor activities and the local trip. The medium-term aim of 'safeguarding – avoidance of crisis point/ increased safety of children' – was harder to evaluate, although there was strong evidence that Holiday Kitchen helped to reduce parental stress.

For the long-term goals of 'reduced obesity amongst children', 'reduced health and education inequalities' and 'improved educational outcomes', evidence from the evaluation was certainly positive, particularly in children's reported learning about healthy food, exercise and the enriching and stimulating activities in which they engaged.

Staff and managers undoubtedly understood the value and importance of the programme and were willing, if given the opportunity, to run future Holiday Kitchens. This was reinforced by the fact that 95% of the sample of parents/carers said that they would recommend Holiday Kitchen to friends and family.

A revised delivery model was introduced based on the 2014 evaluation, and Holiday Kitchen was rolled out to a larger group of settings in the summer of 2015. It continued to run with Children in Need funding in 2016 and 2017.

Discussion and conclusions

Understanding and demonstrating the social impact of Holiday Kitchen were critical to its sustainability and future funding. However, achieving an appropriate and proportionate balance of evaluation, given the time participants spent at Holiday Kitchen, proved to be a challenge. Feedback from children, adults and delivery staff indicated that they felt the amount of evaluation was excessive, particularly on the first day of the programme. An important lesson was learnt here that, although gathering evidence of impact is crucial, it must not distract from the programme itself. Effective evaluation training for staff and volunteers, integrating evaluation activities within the sessions, and using creative and innovative methods which can be delivered quickly and which capture the imaginations of children, can all help achieve this equilibrium.

Evaluating the effectiveness not only of Holiday Kitchen, but also of the evaluation programme itself (through gathering feedback from all relevant groups) was beneficial, and this learning has informed the adaptation of materials and tools for future programmes. The key challenges identified with the evaluation methods used with children included the language barriers to participation (for parents/carers with limited English language and pre-school children with limited speech) and the requirement to cater for such a diverse age range (0-8 years) whilst ensuring that, across this age range, the child's voice was captured. Although all of the evaluation activities were visual, interactive and inclusive, participation levels were still adversely affected by the written and spoken skills of parents/carers who were supporting the younger children. Taking steps to overcome this barrier in future programmes, possibly by recruiting student volunteers from local universities to offer support in completing the activities, may further improve the success and accessibility of the evaluation programme.

The Holiday Kitchen evaluation demonstrates the importance of striving to devise child-friendly methods of data collection, especially when future funding for a social project depends on empirical evidence of its effectiveness. By ensuring that the children's thoughts and opinions were included through a variety of creative and fun means throughout Holiday Kitchen, a body of triangulated data was collected which indicated the strengths and weaknesses of the programme from the children's perspective. The most successful methods across the under-eight age group were visual, especially the weather maps and the tree of hope, indicating the importance of approaches which bypass written language. Such methods also have potential for use with children with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language. Interestingly, where there was crossover of adult- and child-based data collection methods (for example, the tree of hope), the 'child' ones worked well with the adults, again suggesting that innovative, visual methods can be more effective in certain circumstances than traditional methods, even with adults.

Ideally, children would have been involved at every stage of the design and interpretation of the evaluation methods and materials used in Holiday Kitchen, but time and resource constraints meant this was not possible. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the participatory, child-centred methods outlined in this article will be of use to researchers and evaluators in other professional and practice-based contexts, and that those involved in such work continue to share their findings with the wider research community. Ensuring that children are at the heart of the research process is an important project which demands much careful attention and thought. This importance is even more pronounced when the stakes are as high as the continuation of a charitable programme designed to support families in need such as Holiday Kitchen.

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