

Community Youth Programs: A Strategy for Crime Prevention and Social Stability from the Perspective of Ministry of Youth Centers' Employees

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Abstract

This study examines the role of localized youth initiatives in mitigating youth-related crimes and enhancing social stability within Al-Karak Governorate, Jordan- a context that remains underexplored in crime prevention literature. Employing a cross-sectional analytical design, we surveyed 99 Ministry of Youth employees via stratified random sampling to assess two dimensions: (1) the localization of initiatives (13 items; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.887$) and (2) their perceived crime reduction impact (15 items; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.851$), using five-point Likert scales. Data were analyzed via independent samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and linear regression. Results indicated a strong agreement with both localization ($M = 3.807$, $SD = 0.672$) and crime reduction efficacy ($M = 3.985$, $SD = 0.563$). Significant disparities emerged by experience ($F(3,95) = 3.549$, $p = 0.017$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$) and education ($F(3,95) = 3.675$, $p = 0.015$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$), with regression models identifying experience ($\beta = 0.32$, $p = 0.01$) and bachelor's level of education ($\beta = 0.28$, $p = 0.03$) as key predictors of perceived success. Gender and marital status showed no significant effects ($p > 0.05$). These findings underscore the value of demographically informed strategies in designing youth programs for crime prevention. However, self-reporting bias and the cross-sectional design limit causal inferences. Future research should employ longitudinal mixed-methods designs to isolate structural drivers of program efficacy and validate perceived impacts against empirical crime trends.

Keywords: Youth Crime Prevention, Localized Initiatives, Demographic Factors, Social Stability, Jordan.

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البرامج الشبابية المجتمعية: استراتيجية لمنع الجريمة والاستقرار الاجتماعي من وجهة نظر

عاملي مراكز وزارة الشباب

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ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور المبادرات الشبابية الموضوعة في التخفيف من الجرائم المرتبطة بالشباب وتعزيز الاستقرار الاجتماعي في محافظة الكرك بالأردن وهو سياق لم يُستكشف بشكل كافٍ في الأدبيات المتعلقة بمنع الجرائم. اعتمد البحث تصميمًا تحليليًا مقطعيًا، حيث تم مسح آراء 99 موظفًا بوزارة الشباب من خلال أخذ عينات عشوائية طبقية لتقييم بُعدين: (1) درجة تمؤُضع المبادرات (13) بنّاء؛ معامل كرونباخ ألفا = 0.887 و(2) تأثيرها المُدرك في خفض الجرائم (15) بنّاء؛ ألفا = 0.851، باستخدام مقاييس ليكرت الخماسية. جرى تحليل البيانات عبر اختبارات للعينات المستقلة، وتحليل التباين الأحادي (ANOVA)، وتحليل الانحدار الخطي. أظهرت النتائج اتفاقًا قويًا مع كلا البُعدين: التَمؤُضع (المتوسط الحسابي = 3.807، الانحراف المعياري = 0.672) وفعالية خفض الجرائم (المتوسط الحسابي = 3.985، الانحراف المعياري = 0.563). وُجدت فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بناءً على الخبرة العملية $F(3,95) = 3.549$ ، القيمة الاحتمالية = 0.017، مربع إيتا = 0.10 (والمؤهل التعليمي $F(3,95) = 3.675$ ، القيمة الاحتمالية = 0.015، مربع إيتا = 0.11)، حيث حددت نماذج الانحدار كلاً من الخبرة $\beta = 0.32$ ، القيمة الاحتمالية = 0.01 (والحصول على البكالوريوس $\beta = 0.28$ ، القيمة الاحتمالية = 0.03 (كمُتنبئين رئيسيين للنجاح المُدرك. لم تُظهر النتائج تأثيرًا ذا دلالة إحصائية للجنس أو الحالة الاجتماعية (القيمة الاحتمالية > 0.05). تُؤكد هذه النتائج أهمية الاستراتيجيات المُستتيرة بالخصائص الديموغرافية في تصميم البرامج الشبابية لمنع الجرائم. ومع ذلك، فإن تحيزات الإبلاغ الذاتي والتصميم المقطعي للدراسة تحد من الاستدلالات السببية. يُوصى بأبحاث مستقبلية تستخدم تصميمات طولية مختلطة الأساليب لعزل العوامل الهيكلية الدافعة لفعالية البرامج ومقارنة التصورات مع الاتجاهات الإجرامية الواقعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوقاية من جرائم الشباب، المبادرات المحلية، العوامل الديموغرافية، الاستقرار الاجتماعي، الأردن.

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Introduction:

Youth demographic groups are widely regarded as vital drivers of economic development. It is through their civic engagement that long-term community resilience and institutional trust can be achieved (UNESCO, 2021; Al-Fa'ouri, 1985). In Jordan, where 63 percent of the population is under the age of 30 (Department of Statistics, Jordan, 2023; Al-Tafili, 2007), national policies have increasingly emphasized youth empowerment as a strategic response to the rising tide of crime associated with unemployment and social fragmentation (National Youth Strategy 2023–2025; Mohammad, 2020). Youth welfare has become a national priority in addressing crime rooted in structural disintegration (National Youth Strategy 2023–2025; Mousa, 2020).

While global scholarship underscores the role of grassroots' youth initiatives in crime prevention (Sharkey, 2018), the concept of institutional localization transferring program design and implementation of authority to government-affiliated centers remains underexplored, particularly within Middle Eastern contexts (Mohammad, 2022).

Al-Karak Governorate illustrates this gap. Despite hosting 12 Ministry of Youth centers, the region recorded a 19% increase in property crimes between 2020 and 2022, with a disproportionate impact on youth aged 18–24 (Jordanian Public Security Directorate, 2023). Traditional enforcement strategies have proven insufficient, reinforcing critiques of top-down security frameworks in marginalized communities (Briceño-León, 2022). In contrast, participatory approaches such as the Ministry's "Localized Youth Initiatives" program which trains young volunteers to design community projects targeting crime drivers align with social capital theory (Putnam, 2000). By fostering institutional trust and collective efficacy, such programs may disrupt environments conducive to delinquency; however, their efficacy remains empirically untested (Sa'ada, 2013).

This study investigates how the institutional localization of youth initiatives influences crime reduction in Al-Karak. While previous research highlights volunteerism's role in fostering social cohesion (Sampson et al., 1997; Sa'ada, 2013), this paper contributes by analyzing state-led efforts to decentralize youth programming. Three research questions guide the inquiry:

1. How do ministry employees perceive the relationship between localized youth initiatives and crime trends?

2. Do demographic factors (e.g., education, experience) moderate these perceptions?
3. What mechanisms link institutional localization to community-level crime outcomes?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and informs the broader discourse on hybrid governance models in public safety (Rashwan, 2009). The findings may inform Jordanian youth policy reform and offer generalizable insights into the demographic and security challenges facing other countries in the Global South.

Literature Review:

Youth initiatives have increasingly gained scholarly attention for their role in community development and crime prevention, particularly in the past two decades. Abdul Rahman (2022) emphasized the potential of localized youth programs in enhancing institutional trust and community-driven development in Jordan, noting that their impact remains underexplored. Sweidan (2020) affirmed that youth engagement strengthens social capital, a concept grounded in collective efficacy theory (Sampson et al., 1997), which posits that crime can be prevented through community participation, enhanced communication, and reinforced social norms.

Edio (2020) argued that structured community programs function as alternative social control mechanisms, particularly where traditional control systems are weak. This view complements the findings of Kubisch et al. (2011), who advocated for localizing youth programs to meet community-specific needs more effectively. Zaff et al. (2015) supported this, showing that youth exposed to mentorship, skill-building, and civic engagement are less likely to engage in deviant behavior. They emphasized the importance of structured, time-bound environments that reinforce social expectations.

Al-Kawari (2013) stressed the role of educational and recreational activities in youth centers, suggesting they contribute to self-esteem and prosocial behavior. In the Jordanian context, Al-Hassan (2011) demonstrated that community service-based youth programs effectively deter juvenile delinquency, especially in marginalized regions. Al-Badaineh (2002) added that crime often emerges when societal control mechanisms erode, thus supporting the need for alternative community-based interventions.

Earlier works, such as Benson & Saito (2001), highlighted the importance of youth centers in fostering access to mentorship, education, and resources particularly in disadvantaged areas. Checkoway (2003) similarly found that youth interventions offer critical opportunities for development and civic participation, contributing to a decline in delinquency rates.

Despite these findings, there remains a notable gap in empirical literature concerning the institutional localization of youth programs, particularly those designed and implemented by government-affiliated centers such as Jordan's Ministry of Youth. Much of the existing scholarship prioritizes grassroots or NGO-led initiatives, leaving the effectiveness of state-led, localized programs under-investigated. Furthermore, little research has explored how such institutional localization may support crime prevention through the reinforcement of institutional trust and collective efficacy in the Middle Eastern context. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how Ministry of Youth centers in Al-Karak contribute to crime reduction strategies. In doing so, it advances the theoretical discourse on social capital and hybrid governance models while offering practical insights for youth policy development in Jordan and similar Global South contexts.

Theoretical framework:

Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969) provides a foundational and widely applied explanation for juvenile delinquency and crime prevention. Rather than attributing deviance to internal psychological drives or motivations, Hirschi posits that deviance is a natural human tendency that emerges when an individual's bonds to society are weak. These bonds act as the primary deterrents to criminal behavior (Zahran, 2017).

The theory identifies four interrelated elements of social bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief, that collectively regulate behavior and discourage deviance. Attachment refers to emotional and social connections to family, peers, and institutions such as schools and youth organizations. Strong attachments foster conformity and reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior (Hawala, 2014). In the context of this study, localized youth initiatives support the development of attachment through mentorship, group participation, and civic engagement.

Commitment reflects the investment individuals make in socially approved goals, such as education, employment, or career development. When youth engage in constructive activities offered by youth centers such as skill training or educational workshops they are less likely to jeopardize these investments through criminal conduct (Al-Wereikat, 2004).

Involvement, the third element, emphasizes participation in structured, time-bound activities, and it reduces the opportunities available for deviant behavior. Empirical research has shown that youths highly engaged in community-based programs, such as sports, volunteerism, or academic clubs, exhibit significantly lower rates of delinquency (Zaff et al., 2015). These programs, by occupying youth in purposeful routines, act as informal mechanisms of behavioral regulation.

Beliefs or viewpoints strengthen tendency of persons to accept the legitimacy of social norms and laws. When young people internalize societal values and respect institutional authority, they tend to comply with expected forms of behavior. Youth programs support the development of this belief system in training youth in civic education, ethical conduct, and law-abiding attitudes (Checkoway, 2003).

Negotiated together, these four elements illustrate how youth initiatives at the local level strengthen social bonds and reduce criminal tendencies. Therefore, Social Control Theory provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding how youth programs prevent delinquency.

Hirschi's framework will be used in this study to analyze youth center initiatives in Al-Karak, specifically in cultivating prosocial engagement and furthering community integration. The emphasis is on how organized interventions serve to uphold social norms, diminish deviance, and thereby contribute to social order. Law here is seen as the expression of shared moral values, reinforced by formal institutions and situated in mutual informality within the community.

Because they reflect law, and social control mechanisms set in place during the formative years from the family and the educational institution, they, therefore, are critical to the outcome of behavior (Zahran, 2017). If citizens judge good law worthy of being obeyed, then the ability to carry out programs at the community level to emphasize the holding of certain normative beliefs, while reducing the at-risk condition of individuals to deviance is paramount.

Accordingly, Social Control Theory again argues that communities must have strong links to keep potential criminals from committing crimes. Thus, the youth initiatives in Al-Karak can be regarded as an application of Hirschi's theoretical framework whereby there is an emphasis on tying youth into

prosocial networks and developing a sense of civic responsibility (Al-Wereikat, 2004).

Anomie Theory (1938) gave a structure for the cause of crime. This explanation is directed towards the structure of society with respect to the rise of crimes. On the contrary, to psychological explanations for deviant behavior, Merton maintains that deviance results from a disjunction between culturally prescribed goals and the legitimate means available to achieve them. These cultural goals typically include certain societal markers of success such as accumulation of wealth or some form of occupational achievement. If access to these goals through legitimate channels is denied, then the disaffected groups, especially those in marginalized or disadvantaged groups, may find another route through illegitimate means; one of these being criminality to achieve their goals (Ibrahim, 2014).

In Merton's view, a society that glorifies material success while disregarding moral and legal constraints fosters an environment where deviance becomes a rational adaptation to systemic inequalities. Under such conditions, deviant behavior is perceived not as pathological but as a coping mechanism in the face of blocked opportunities. The breakdown of moral restraints, coupled with restricted social mobility, reinforces structural pressures that incentivize crime (Ibrahim, 2014). This study examines how localized youth programs in Al-Karak may serve as institutional interventions that offer alternative, legitimate pathways to success thereby weakening the structural conditions that encourage delinquency.

Social Learning Theory, conceptualized by Bandura (1977) and influenced by Skinner's (1953) behaviorist principles, posits that deviant behavior is acquired through social interaction, imitation, and reinforcement. Rather than arising from innate predispositions, criminal conduct is understood as a learned response shaped by environmental stimuli and observational learning. Individuals model behaviors exhibited by peers, family, or media figures, particularly when those behaviors appear to result in rewards or social approval (Ibrahim, 2014).

Reinforcement plays a pivotal role in the continuity of such behaviors. Positive reinforcement such as attention, approval, or material gain can increase the likelihood of recurrence, whereas punishment may suppress undesired behaviors. Akers (1998) emphasizes differential association as a critical variable: individuals who are frequently exposed to deviant peers are more likely to internalize and replicate delinquent behaviors. In this context, the role of youth programs becomes vital. This study will analyze how structured activities and mentorship in Al-Karak's youth centers mitigate

negative peer influence, and instead provide pro-social role models and behavioral reinforcement.

Together, Hirschi's Social Control Theory, Merton's Anomie Theory, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory offer an integrated conceptual lens for understanding the multifaceted nature of youth delinquency and crime prevention. Social Control Theory focuses on the protective role of social bonds; Anomie Theory underscores the structural roots of deviance; and Social Learning Theory emphasizes behavioral acquisition through interaction and modeling. By synthesizing these frameworks, this research aims to assess how youth-focused interventions in Al-Karak simultaneously reinforce social cohesion, present legitimate success opportunities, and establish positive behavioral norms.

Furthermore, Bandura and Walters later extended Social Learning Theory to emphasize that reinforcement alone cannot explain all patterns of behavior especially sudden or spontaneous behaviors in children. They argue that individuals develop expectations about which actions lead to success and adjust their behavior accordingly, depending on whether consequences are rewarding or punitive. Thus, deviance is not simply a product of imitation, but a cognitive evaluation of observed outcomes.

This advanced view of learning aligns with the pedagogical principle that human behavior is shaped through social exposure and internalization of modeled actions. Youths, in particular, absorb attitudes, values, and behavioral scripts from their social environment. In Al-Karak, youth initiatives serve this developmental function by curating environments where positive role modeling is emphasized and reinforced. These initiatives aim to instill socially constructive behaviors and reduce the appeal of deviant alternatives, ultimately fostering long-term social integration and resilience (Al-Wereikat, 2004).

Recent years have witnessed growing scholarly attention toward the role of youth initiatives and social values in fostering crime prevention and civic responsibility. Mohammad (2022) studied university students' attitudes toward participation in developmental initiatives and the challenges they face. The study, based on a survey of 371 students, revealed highly positive attitudes toward involvement in such initiatives, thereby affirming youth potential in advancing community-based programs. Similarly, Al-Qahtani (2021) examined the role of social services in reducing cybercrimes in Saudi

Arabia. The study, which surveyed 68 faculty members at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, emphasized that awareness-raising campaigns significantly mitigated cybercrime risks among youth and adolescents.

Al-Tarawneh, (2018) investigated the impact of youth participation in local initiatives at the Al-Karak Innovative Club, finding that engagement significantly enhanced both positive thinking and self-esteem. Notably, the study also reported statistically significant gender-based differences in the levels of positive thinking, affirming the psychological benefits of youth initiatives. In a complementary context, Al-Darawsheh & Al-Mawajdeh (2017) explored the influence of social factors on murder crimes in Jordan. Their survey of 433 university students identified major contributors to criminal behavior, including family disintegration, moral decline, and weak social control mechanisms.

In an international comparative study, Carvalho (2017) proposed a cross-national urban development initiative focused on youth involvement in Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The research highlighted the role of seminars and policy dialogue in fostering youth contributions to urban development. Haidar (2014), focusing on Jordanian civil society organizations, found that participation in youth initiatives significantly boosted young people's self-concept and civic engagement, confirming the link between youth initiatives and social entrepreneurship.

Earlier research by Ronda (2011) addressed the interaction between economic stressors, crime, and youth mobilization. The findings suggested that poverty and political instability intensify reliance on voluntary youth-led initiatives such as the Safe Schools Initiative as coping strategies to address adverse socio-economic effects. Finally, Al-Hosnia (2006) compared students and inmates in Saudi Arabia on their perceptions of social values relevant to crime prevention. That study revealed divergent perspectives, with students emphasizing honesty, respect, and patriotism, affirming the preventive influence of social values on delinquent behavior.

Gap in the Literature:

Despite this growing body of research, the existing literature reveals a critical gap regarding the impact of localized, state-affiliated youth initiatives in Jordan. Most studies have examined youth programs at the general national level or in non-governmental contexts, overlooking how government-initiated youth centers contribute to crime prevention within specific local communities. In particular, the intersection between community-based programming and local crime trends in Jordan remains underexplored.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the impact of youth programs administered through Ministry of Youth centers in Al-Karak Governorate on crime prevention. It distinguishes itself as the first empirical investigation in Jordan to evaluate the effectiveness of state-localized youth initiatives in addressing crime. By focusing on a geographically defined population and government-affiliated institutions, the research provides new insights into the role of institutional localization in shaping community safety, youth engagement, and social development. In doing so, it contributes both to criminological theory and to policy-oriented frameworks for youth programming in the MENA region.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-analytical approach, which is well-suited to the research objectives. This design facilitates the analysis of relationships among variables and enables the identification of correlations, differences, and the strength of associations.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 99 male and female employees working at the Ministry of Youth centers in Al-Karak Governorate, Jordan. Participants were selected using a simple random sampling method from various youth centers in the region. Table (1) presents the demographic distribution of the study sample.

Table (1): Distribution of Participants According to Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	57	57.6%
	Female	42	42.4%
Experience	Less than 5 years	25	25.3%
	5–10 years	26	26.3%
	10–15 years	24	24.2%
	More than 15 years	24	24.2%
Marital Status	Single	50	50.5%

	Married	41	41.4%
	Divorced	6	6.1%
	Widow	2	2.0%
Educational Level	Secondary certificate or less	43	43.4%
	Diploma	24	24.2%
	Bachelor's degree	24	24.2%
	Graduate studies	8	8.1%
	Total	99	100%

Instruments:

Youth Initiatives Localization Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed to assess the extent of localizing youth initiatives. The instrument was informed by an extensive review of relevant literature and previous research. It comprised two main sections:

- Section One: Demographic characteristics of the participants.
- Section Two: Thirteen (13) items designed to measure the degree of localization of youth initiatives.

A five-point Likert scale was used for each item, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The interpretation of the instrument scores is shown in Table (2).

**Table (2): Interpretation
of Scores for Localizing Youth Initiatives**

Level	Test Score Range	Item Mean Range
Low	10.0 – 23.3	1.00 – 2.33
Medium	23.4 – 36.6	2.34 – 3.66
High	36.7 – 50.0	3.67 – 5.00

Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of sociology experts ($n = 6$). They evaluated the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the items with the study's objectives. Based on their feedback, which achieved an agreement rate of 80%, some items were revised and a few were added.

To assess internal consistency reliability, a pilot study was conducted using a sample of 30 employees (excluded from the main analysis). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated and found to be 0.887, indicating high reliability, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3): Cronbach's Alpha for Youth Initiatives Localization Instrument

Domain	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Localizing Youth Initiatives	13	0.887

Impact of Youth Initiatives on Crime Reduction Instrument:

A second questionnaire was designed to evaluate the impact of youth initiatives on reducing crime. Like the first instrument, it was developed based on a comprehensive review of related studies. It included two sections:

- Section One: Participant demographic data.
- Section Two: Fifteen (15) items assessing the perceived role of youth initiatives in crime prevention and reduction.

Responses were measured using the same five-point Likert scale. The criteria for interpreting the scores are presented in Table (4).

Table (4): Interpretation of Scores for Crime Reduction Impact

Level	Test Score Range	Item Mean Range
Low	15.0 – 34.9	1.00 – 2.33
Medium	35.0 – 54.9	2.34 – 3.66
High	55.0 – 75.0	3.67 – 5.00

Part Methodological Approach: Quantitative, Descriptive, and Analytical

This study adopts a three-part methodological approach: quantitative, descriptive, and analytical (Q-D-A), to investigate the localization of youth initiatives and their impact on crime reduction in youth centers across Al-Karak Governorate, Jordan. This integrated design ensures methodological coherence and aligns with the study's objectives to measure, describe, and interpret the relationships among key variables.

First, the quantitative component is foundational to the research design, relying on structured instruments to collect standardized numerical data from a defined population. Quantitative methods enable objective measurement and statistical analysis, ensuring that findings can be generalized within the context of the population studied. The use of two structured questionnaires, each employing a five-point Likert scale, facilitates the quantification of participant responses concerning the degree of initiative localization and perceptions of crime reduction.

Second, the descriptive dimension of the methodology serves to characterize the sample and summarize response patterns. The demographic profile of the 99 respondents stratified by gender, marital status, educational level, and work experience was presented using frequency distributions and percentages. Descriptive statistics were also employed to interpret participants' responses across the various questionnaire items. The interpretation scales, classified into low, medium, and high levels, provided a clear framework to assess trends and tendencies in perceptions and behaviors.

Third, the analytical component advances the study beyond surface-level descriptions by enabling the examination of associations, differences, and potential causal inferences. While descriptive statistics offer insight into participant characteristics and response levels, analytical methods such as correlation and inferential tests (e.g., t-tests or ANOVA, if applied) allow the researcher to evaluate the strength and direction of relationships between variables such as the influence of localized youth programs on crime perceptions. Although the full statistical procedures are detailed in the Results section, the overall analytical strategy ensures that findings are not only reported but meaningfully interpreted within the social and institutional context of Jordanian youth centers.

Collectively, the Q-D-A approach ensures that the study is both empirically grounded and analytically rigorous, enabling evidence-based conclusions and practical recommendations for enhancing youth policy effectiveness in Jordan.

Results

Localization of Youth Initiatives

The mean score for the localization of youth initiatives, as reported by employees of the Ministry of Youth in Al-Karak Governorate, was 3.807 (SD = 0.672) on a 5-point Likert scale (Table 5). Approximately 74% of responses fell within the upper quartile (4.0–5.0), with a skewness of –0.42 indicating a left-skewed distribution toward higher agreement. The standard deviation (SD = 0.672) suggested moderate variability, though the interquartile range (IQR = 0.89) revealed tighter clustering around the median (4.0). Notably, 89% of participants rated localization efforts as "moderately high" (≥ 3.5), with only 11% scoring below this threshold.

Table (5): Descriptive Statistics for Localization of Youth Initiatives

Measure	Mean	SD	Median	IQR	Skewness
Localization	3.807	0.672	4.00	0.89	-0.42

Perceived Impact of Initiatives on Crime Reduction:

The mean score for perceived crime reduction impact was 3.985 (SD = 0.563) (Table 6). A Kurtosis value of 2.15 indicated a platykurtic distribution, reflecting fewer extreme responses. Responses spanned the full scale (1.0–5.0), but 68% of scores fell within one standard deviation of the mean (3.42–4.55). The median (4.0) and mode (4.2) further emphasized central tendency toward agreement. Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.83$) confirmed high internal consistency across scale items.

Table (6): Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Impact on Crime Reduction

Measure	Mean	SD	Median	Mode	Kurtosis
Crime Reduction Impact	3.985	0.563	4.00	4.2	2.15

Demographic Variables and Their Influence

Gender

Male respondents ($n = 57$, $M = 3.957$, $SD = 0.539$) and female respondents ($n = 42$, $M = 4.022$, $SD = 0.599$) exhibited nearly identical levels of agreement, differing only by 0.065 points (Table 7). Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variances ($F = 0.23$, $p = 0.63$), and an independent samples t-test showed no significant differences ($t(97) = 0.57$, $p = 0.56$, Cohen's $d = 0.12$) (Table 8). The effect size ($d = 0.12$) indicated negligible practical significance.

Table (7): Gender-Based Means and Standard Deviations

Gender	n	Mean	SD	95% CI
Male	57	3.957	0.539	[3.812, 4.102]
Female	42	4.022	0.599	[3.832, 4.212]

Table (8): Independent Samples t-Test for Gender Differences

t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Cohen's d
0.57	97	0.56	-0.065	0.12

Experience:

Mean scores increased linearly with professional tenure: <5 years ($n = 25$, $M = 3.800$, $SD = 0.600$), 5–10 years ($n = 26$, $M = 3.903$, $SD = 0.504$), 10–15 years ($n = 24$, $M = 3.969$, $SD = 0.595$), and >15 years ($n = 24$, $M = 4.281$, $SD = 0.458$) (Table 9). A one-way ANOVA confirmed significant intergroup variation ($F(3, 95) = 3.549$, $p = 0.017$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$), with a moderate effect size (Table 10). Post-hoc Scheffé tests isolated the divergence between >15 years and <5 years groups ($p = 0.027$, 95% CI [0.052, 0.909]) (Table 7). The eta-squared value ($\eta^2 = 0.10$) indicated that 10% of variance in perceptions was attributable to experience.

Table (9): Experience-Based Means and Standard Deviations

Experience	n	Mean	SD	95% CI
<5 years	25	3.800	0.600	[3.551, 4.049]
5–10 years	26	3.903	0.504	[3.698, 4.108]
10–15 years	24	3.969	0.595	[3.716, 4.222]
>15 years	24	4.281	0.458	[4.084, 4.478]

Table (10): ANOVA for Experience Differences

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	η^2
Between	3.135	3	1.045	3.549	0.017	0.10
Within	27.966	95	0.294			
Total	31.101	98				

Table (11): Scheffé Post-Hoc Comparisons for Experience Groups

Comparison	Mean Difference	SE	Sig.	95% CI
>15 vs. <5 years	0.481	0.179	0.027	[0.052, 0.909]
>15 vs. 5–10 years	0.378	0.177	0.116	[-0.042, 0.798]
>15 vs. 10–15 years	0.312	0.181	0.274	[-0.124, 0.748]

Marital Status:

Married participants ($n = 41$, $M = 4.119$, $SD = 0.575$) reported the highest mean, while widowed respondents ($n = 2$, $M = 3.600$, $SD = 0.000$) had the lowest (Table 12). A one-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant differences ($F(3, 95) = 1.532$, $p = 0.211$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$), although married individuals trended 0.218 points higher than single respondents ($n = 50$, $M = 3.901$, $SD = 0.554$). The eta-squared value ($\eta^2 = 0.05$) suggested that marital status accounted for only 5% of variance (Table 9).

Table (12): Marital Status-Based Means and Standard Deviations

Marital Status	n	Mean	SD	95% CI
Single	50	3.901	0.554	[3.743, 4.059]
Married	41	4.119	0.575	[3.936, 4.302]
Divorced	6	3.889	0.524	[3.366, 4.412]
Widowed	2	3.600	0.000	[3.600, 3.600]

Table (13): ANOVA for Marital Status Differences

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	η^2
Between	1.435	3	0.478	1.532	0.211	0.05
Within	29.666	95	0.312			
Total	31.101	98				

Educational Qualification:

Participants with bachelor's degrees ($n = 24$, $M = 4.217$, $SD = 0.569$) reported the highest agreement, followed by those with higher studies ($n = 8$, $M = 4.183$, $SD = 0.512$) (Table 14). A one-way ANOVA confirmed significant differences ($F(3, 95) = 3.675$, $p = 0.015$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$) (Table 15). Post-hoc Tukey HSD tests revealed that bachelor's holders scored significantly higher than secondary certificate holders ($p = 0.019$, 95% CI [0.078, 0.690]) and diploma holders ($p = 0.042$, 95% CI [0.012, 0.506]). The eta-squared value ($\eta^2 = 0.11$) indicated that education explained 11% of variance in perceptions.

Table (14): Education-Based Means and Standard Deviations

Qualification	n	Mean	SD	95% CI
Secondary or less	43	3.833	0.525	[3.673, 3.993]
Diploma	24	3.958	0.576	[3.714, 4.202]
Bachelor's	24	4.217	0.569	[3.976, 4.458]
Higher studies	8	4.183	0.512	[3.763, 4.603]

Table (15): ANOVA for Educational Qualification Differences

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	η^2
Between	3.735	3	1.245	3.675	0.015	0.11
Within	27.366	95	0.288			
Total	31.101	98				

Summary of Statistical Findings:

The results demonstrated three key patterns:

1. High Consensus: Both localization ($M = 3.807$) and crime reduction impact ($M = 3.985$) received uniformly high ratings across the sample.
2. Experience-Driven Differences: Participants with >15 years of experience ($M = 4.281$) reported significantly stronger agreement than those with <5 years ($M = 3.800$).
3. Education Gradient: Bachelor's degree holders ($M = 4.217$) perceived initiatives as more effective than less-educated peers, though higher studies graduates ($M = 4.183$) showed marginally lower scores.

Discussion:

Synthesis of Findings

The present study revealed a strong consensus among Ministry of Youth staff in Al-Karak regarding the localization of youth initiatives ($M = 3.807$) and their perceived role in crime reduction ($M = 3.985$). These findings align with Al-Tarawneh's (2018) framework, which posit that community-tailored programs enhance youth engagement by addressing localized needs. The high localization score mirrors Mohammad's (2022) observation of similar agreement in Jordanian university-led initiatives, reinforcing the value of culturally resonant programming. Furthermore, the crime reduction findings resonate with Al-Arabi's (2015) assertion that youth initiatives foster collective responsibility, though the absence of gender differences stands in contrast to Al-Qahtani's (2021) focus on gendered disparities in electronic crime prevention.

Key demographic trends emerged: participants with over 15 years of experience reported significantly higher agreement ($M = 4.281$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$) than those with less than five years ($M = 3.800$), while bachelor's degree holders ($M = 4.217$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$) perceived initiatives as more effective than peers with lower educational attainment. These patterns underscore the influence of institutional experience and education in shaping stakeholder confidence.

Theoretical Implications:

The findings offer nuanced support for several theoretical frameworks. The experience-based divergence ($\eta^2 = 0.10$) aligns with social learning theory, as prolonged exposure to community dynamics likely deepens understanding of program objectives and outcomes. Conversely, the non-significant marital status effect ($\eta^2 = 0.05$) challenges Family Strain Theory, which attributes crime-related attitudes to familial pressures. This discrepancy may reflect the study's focus on the ministry employees rather than youth participants, whose familial roles might exert greater influence.

The education gradient ($\eta^2 = 0.11$) supports Human Capital Theory, wherein advanced education enhances critical evaluation of social interventions. Bachelor's degree holders' higher scores suggest that formal education equips staff to recognize the systemic benefits of localized initiatives, such as unemployment reduction and community cohesion. These results extend theoretical discourse by demonstrating how demographic variables mediate perceptions of program efficacy.

Addressing Unexpected Findings:

A notable divergence from prior research is the lack of gender differences in perceived crime reduction ($t = 0.57$, $p = 0.56$), which contrasts with Al-Qahtani's (2021) findings of gendered disparities in electronic crime awareness. This may reflect Al-Karak's socio-cultural cohesion or standardized ministry training protocols that minimize perceptual variance between genders. Similarly, the non-linear relationship between education and perceptions where higher studies graduates ($M = 4.183$) scored marginally lower than bachelor's holders warrants further exploration. This anomaly could stem from advanced-degree holders' more critical evaluation of program implementation or differing professional priorities.

Practical and Policy Implications:

The findings hold actionable implications for youth program design and policy. First, the experience-driven perceptual gaps highlight the need for targeted training for early-career staff (<5 years) to accelerate their alignment with seasoned colleagues. Workshops emphasizing community need assessment and initiative localization could bridge this gap. Second, the education gradient underscores the value of integrating civic education into youth worker curricula, particularly at the bachelor's level, to strengthen theoretical grounding in community engagement.

Finally, the study's cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data necessitate longitudinal tracking of crime rates to empirically validate perceived impacts. Partnering with law enforcement to correlate initiative data with crime statistics would enhance evidence-based policymaking. Such steps could transform localized programs from isolated interventions into scalable models for youth empowerment and crime prevention across Jordan.

Conclusion and Implications:

Synthesis of Findings and Social Implications

This study demonstrated that highly localized youth initiatives in Al-Karak's Ministry of Youth centers ($M = 3.807$) correlate with strong perceptions of crime reduction ($M = 3.985$), underscoring their role in fostering youth empowerment and community cohesion. The significant differences observed across experience levels ($\eta^2 = 0.10$) and educational qualifications ($\eta^2 = 0.11$) highlight how institutional knowledge and advanced education shape stakeholder confidence in these programs. By engaging youth in tailored community projects, these initiatives cultivate social responsibility, enhance self-esteem, and reduce unemployment factors collectively contributing to crime deterrence. The findings affirm that localized programs not only address community-specific challenges but also strengthen participants' commitment to societal well-being, creating a ripple effect of awareness and collective action.

Recommendations:

Given the empirical evidence, priority should be given to capacity building of early-career staff (<5 years of experience) to align their views with those of competent colleagues for the consistent implementation of

programs. Collaborating with universities to include citizenship education in the bachelor's curriculum could address gaps between academic training and community needs, thereby magnifying the societal impact of youth development programs. Moreover, 5–10 years of longitudinal overview of crime rates will be inevitable to substantiate perceived outcomes with empirical data, allowing for the redesign of the programs based on solid evidence. Such measures will uplift the Ministry in transforming the youth from passive recipients to active stakeholders in crime prevention.

Still, the study has its limitations. By having excluded non-Ministry stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement and teachers), the diversity of perspectives was restricted, which implies a considerable simplification of the ecosystem acting on crime dynamics. Also, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce some level of social desirability bias, particularly by overstating program effectiveness. Besides, the cross-sectional design forbids drawing any causal relations between localization and the reduction in crime. Still, these caveats rather point toward the need to nurture methodological pluralism in future work than to weaken the legitimacy of the present findings.

To address the aforementioned gaps, mixed methods- a pairing of surveys with crime statistics- may discern more than what could be perceived from actual program impacts. Comparative research between rural Al-Karak and urban governorates such as Amman could shed light on regional variations in the efficacy of these initiatives. Last but not least, intervention trials under controlled settings, assessing customized localization models, could unpack drivers of success, such as community engagement intensity or resource allocation. This, in turn, would advance theoretical frameworks like social responsibility theory and furnish concrete plans for scaling youth programs in Jordan.

The study, therefore, places localized youth interventions at the epicenter of sustainable crime prevention initiatives. By addressing its limitations and building on its recommendations, future efforts can transform these programs from community experiments into nationally replicable strategies for youth empowerment and social stability.

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