

Risk Factors That Influence Criminal Victimization

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the risk factors that influence criminal victimisation and endeavour to manage the recognised risk factors to control and prevent criminal manipulation or reduce the likely impact characteristics. If it can be well determined with sufficient specificity that people with specific characteristics are more prone than others to become crime victims and that such crimes are bound to occur at particular spots than others, attempts to control and prevent such crimes could be more helpful. That way, individuals would be made to understand when the crime risks are most pronounced. According to lifestyle exposure theory, the crime risk is influenced by functional opportunities for crime, local environments and associated exposure to criminal threats in society. Based on situational crime prevention theory, this study aims to determine why the offender's decisions to commit a crime are influenced more by the immediate situation than by considering possible detection and punishment. Authorities have not adequately recognised their rights and needs as victims of those harms. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. This method lets the scholar get data from several sets of populations simultaneously. In this study, the focus is on reducing victimisation through improving individual personal security. Towards this end, the researcher examined the role played by particular persons in victimisation. The study examined these relationships using samples of common area residents (n = 210), key informants (n = 45) and 145 members of focused group discussions. The findings of this research are expected to provide data that helps inform the policymakers and the individuals who are the primary victims of criminal victimisation of the need for enhanced personal security to assist in crime risk management. Researchers investigated Kajjido County, located on the southern side of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Keywords: Personal security; Crime victims; Crime risk management; local environment.

INTRODUCTION

Routine activity theory emerged in the 1970s to show how lifestyle decisions situate individuals in situations where they are more likely to interact with others and participate in activities that increase crime and victimisation [1]. According to theories about these activities and lifestyles, the degree to which a victim's habitual activities or lifestyle presents possibilities for a motivated criminal to commit a crime is a helpful indicator of that person's vulnerability to victimisation. Additional unsafe situations include children playing unsupervised during

leisure time away from home, taking risks during leisure activities, residing in high-risk areas for crime, and interacting with known offenders. These situations encourage criminal activity and put people at risk of becoming victims. This idea explains the perception of the combined forces at work [2].

Literature review

People feel more secure in society when they are secure in themselves. By spotting dangers and putting measures in place to strengthen their

security, people help to increase security [3]. Consequently, this enhances the state's security. Ranking in the first place in terms of economic success, public presence, and cultural diversity, Canada is one of the world's most peaceful countries. In comparison, Canada has a relatively low crime rate. Furthermore, Rwanda is the top-ranked nation in Africa for safety, with a safety index score of approximately 73.2. [4]. Because of its previous struggles, Rwandans have been able to reimagine their society and make it more peaceful and cohesive. A collective joint commitment to law and order, supported by a solid legal administration and an ingrained ethical code that values public interest, has reduced crime [5].

Walking in dimly lit locations or areas with less people traffic is something that one should try to avoid whenever feasible [6]. It's crucial to walk with confidence. When doing so, attackers tend to target those who seem vulnerable and are easy to victimise. Being organised is another effective strategy for preventing bodily injury to oneself. Always have your keys on hand, and be prepared to unlock and relock doors when approaching the car or house. Going through a person's pockets or bag looking for keys distracts them, leaves them open to attack, and increases the chance that the victim may be grabbed or hurt [7]. People can still defend themselves if a suspected attacker approaches them by moving to safety, raising awareness of the situation by creating noise and exerting as much resistance as possible. The state in which a person feels secure and shielded from danger or injury is known as personal security. According to Clarke, an individual avoids victimisation if the assailants are kept away from them through deterrent measures like guards, locks, or warning indicators like using alarms [3]. The condition results from the possible victim's tactics to set up barriers that could make it harder for the potential offender to carry out the offence. Clarke says that the potential offender would take advantage of the target's weakness or vulnerability or be responsible for each person's lousy luck [8].

According to Cohen and Felson's regular activities theory, predatory crime results from a likely perpetrator, a suitable target converging in time and space, and the lack of capable guardianship [5]. The management of access and exclusion of possible offenders is the role that Cohen and Felson suggest security should play.

Implementing steps to hinder the meeting between the appropriate target and the potential offender is necessary for personal protection to regulate the convergence of the two parts. There won't be a convergence of risks if obstacles like gates or locks keep a possible home break at bay. Homeowners can also use alarm systems and barriers to prevent unauthorised persons from entering the residence, and an alarm sound can dissuade a potential criminal from carrying out their goal [9].

When a possible victim ensures such convergence doesn't occur, they have fulfilled their responsibility to prevent victimisation. According to the theory, a person or animal near the target and possessing capable guardianship might discourage an offender. Capable guardianship is not limited to police officers or security guards; it can come from someone or anything close to the target [10]. Criminologists initially applied the routine activities approach to predatory crime. Any unlawful act in which a person knowingly and purposefully causes harm to another person or their property is known as a predatory crime. The absence of a capable guardianship determines the occurrence of crime. This principle governs the behaviour of potential offenders and victims and explains the phenomenon of convergence in space [11].

According to Clarke, it could make sense to regulate land usage through environmental activities, make crime a high-risk, low-reward endeavour, and establish conditions that encourage law compliance from the general public and make it difficult for would-be criminals to conduct crimes [12]. Residents may be recommended to organise neighbourhood associations and participate in appropriate personal activities. According to Oscar Newman, we need to build our community to promote the development of a social bond that acts as a deterrent to crime by allowing a social texture to emerge physically [13]. The result is a scenario that demonstrates locally generated actions and a sense of neighbourhood networking; this preceded the advent of modern urban planning by being in human habitation forms for a substantial amount of time.

Personal security is now an essential component of many safety and security strategies. People have always disregarded how the victim contributes to criminal conduct and how the victim might stop it. Individuals could more

objectively evaluate the risk of widespread anxiety that currently limits their ability to enjoy parks and the freedom to travel about the city after darkness. It hasn't been possible to achieve those high goals [14]. The public may desire fewer suffering of people and property losses, a criminal justice system that is more accessible to the needs of ordinary people, and the restoration of victimisation to the financial and compassionate circumstances that existed before the crime. Crime risk management can achieve these goals by controlling the crime hazard before the crime occurs [15]. Victimologists may wish to understand why specific individuals, such as particular residents, usually become victims of crime while others do not, while criminologists may seek to identify the fundamental causes of crime by learning the reasoning behind it. Victimologists are aware that anyone can happen to be in a bad place at the wrong time. Still, they can't help but wonder why certain people are targeted more frequently than others or victimised repeatedly [16].

According to Schreck and colleagues, a person's daily schedule or routine activities affect their likelihood of becoming a victim of crime [10]. There is a high danger of becoming a victim of crime when people go about their daily lives and encounter prospective criminals. According to Dignam, those who lead a lifestyle that involves criminal activity are more likely to meet with offenders, increasing their risk of being victims of crime themselves [17]. Similarly, they might observe that certain people, objects, and neighbourhoods have prominent attributes influencing potential criminals to select those individuals as legitimate targets. People regard this exceptional quality as an attractor, which reflects the qualities of a specific target. Due to its value, the offender's natural attraction to their target indicates the target's allure. In this way, offenders select an appropriate target based on its attraction level [18].

Researchers systematically link the routine activity hypothesis to lifestyle theory. According to Felson, some lifestyle choices or behaviours put people in situations where victimisation is likely to occur [19]. As a result, a person's lifestyle may increase their vulnerability to being a victim of crime. Undoubtedly, when a person interacts (by behaviour and way of living) with potential criminals, they are creating opportunities for victimisation by crime. Researchers have identified lifestyle

characteristics that increase an individual's risk of victimisation [20]. These factors include the types of people they interact with, whether or not they work outside the home, and the types of recreational activities they participate in. Accordingly, a person is more likely than others to become a target for personal victimisation if they collaborate with lawbreakers, work outside the home, and engage in certain activities (such as going out late at night, travelling, and spending time with people they do not consider to be their family members [21]).

In the 1970s, Schreck and colleagues conducted sophisticated analyses of victimisation patterns in the National Crime Survey [22]. These studies helped establish a novel theoretical path to explain the hazards of victimisation. In light of this, the researchers proposed the homogamy rule, explaining why certain people are likelier to become victims than others. This example illustrates how a person's likelihood of being a victim increases with the frequency with which they interact with a group of likely offenders. This repetition may resonate with a particular person or group's social status or way of life. Furthermore, because they spend more time outside their homes meeting potential perpetrators, men are more likely to become victims. These scientific studies proved critical in assessing the theoretical implications of knowledge regarding the notion of victim/offender overlap, particularly when employing routine activity/lifestyle propositions [20].

Victimisation and Lifestyle. Victimisation is the outcome of criminal activity that causes harm to people, and it has risk factors that are related to lifestyle decisions [10]. For example, someone anticipating a low risk of being victimised might know the basics of his surroundings and avoid potentially dangerous situations, including going for a nighttime stroll, dressing expensively, or leaving doors open to a house or car. For example, a person at medium risk would lock their car doors but still go outside at night to get to their vehicle. Therefore, even though the car is secure, it's unlikely that the path leading to it is safe. A high-victimisation risk individual would regularly put themselves in risky situations and disregard the majority of security precautions. Numerous factors contribute to an individual's likelihood of being a victim, which illustrates how our daily behaviours contribute to victimisation [23].

Lifestyle choices and contributing factors. While it is well recognised that certain lifestyle decisions can raise one's likelihood of being a victim, many people are unaware that certain lifestyle decisions call for using sound common sense to prevent becoming victims ourselves [17]. For instance, if at all feasible, we should not walk home alone at night; we should lock our houses and cars when not in use; when visiting a region we are unfamiliar with, be mindful of our surroundings, and stay away from areas where crime is known to be prevalent. It is unknown why most people carelessly neglect to take measures even when they are aware that they are exposed to harmful situations, even though it is recognised that all of these situations can lessen our susceptibility to assault [24].

Risk assessment. While risk assessment is one way to determine the likelihood that a particular person will become a victim of victimisation, it is unknown how to alter the risk variables examined to prevent victimisation. A risk assessment can help determine how likely a potential offender is to find and choose a suitable victim to commit the crime. The assessed risk of the decided offender is what this is called [8]. The likelihood of misconduct increases with the victim's vulnerability and the potential offender's profound willingness to commit the crime. For example, it is more likely that someone will be mugged in a dark, deserted back street or an uncontrolled area of town than it is in a police station or a safe, locked home. It is well recognised that several factors, such as socioeconomic level and monetary status, increase one's vulnerability to victimisation and increase the likelihood of being victimised; yet, it is unclear why the majority of people believe that everything will work out and nothing negative will happen.

Social and Economic. Studies about victimisation rates and socioeconomic status appear to be consistent and predictable [22]. While statistics consistently indicate that young adults and teenagers have the highest victimisation rates, it is unclear why people without formal education and those who reside in low-income neighbourhoods are more likely to become victims of crime regularly. While it is true that economically distressed places have a higher crime rate, policymakers do not know what measures should be implemented to lower the rate of criminal victimisation in these areas.

Monetary status. Crime thrives in less fortunate locations and is disproportionately prevalent in lower-class neighbourhoods [25]. It is reasonable to assume that this pattern will occur when residents have fewer guardians or protective resources, such as police presence. Similarly, those who commit crimes typically come from lower-class backgrounds, which increases the likelihood that a victim may encounter an offender. Since it might be challenging to keep crime under control, this might not be the most excellent place to reside. Living in a lower-income area may require making specific arrangements for increased supervision and physical security [26].

Reduction of provocation. Many people will be less likely to commit crimes if provocation is decreased [4]. An excellent illustration is when management provides courteous, well-organised lines to alleviate patron annoyance in schools, bus terminals, hospitals, and other establishments. Ensuring patrons do not become irate when refused seating and grow weary of standing for extended periods helps prevent confrontations between management and patrons. If not, they can start a riot when they feel mistreated.

These are commonsense methods that can lower violent crime. Many recognise that when people become so aroused that they cause chaos and unanticipated harm, those in positions of power could have prevented it. Still, it is unclear why many organisations cannot stop crimes using basic preventive measures. Because crime is an interactive process, risk is more related explicitly to victim involvement. According to the Office for Victims of Crime, career criminals who learn critical information about the vulnerabilities of individuals in a particular area may commit crimes repeatedly since they know they will always be successful [10]. They are aware of the strategies they have used successfully in the past. Even if it is improper for someone to double park in front of a store, leave the engine running, and get a cup of tea, young thrill-seekers might prefer to take advantage of this negligence and drive away such automobiles. However, it is unclear what should be done to stop this behaviour.

The situational crime prevention theory holds that society unintentionally contributes to the creation of crime. This theory draws its core concepts from rational choice, routine activity, and criminal pattern theories [8]. Society creates

things that are easy to take, such as unlocked phones and gadgets that aren't secured against loss or theft. Thieves can easily steal cars and their parts from parking lots because they are insecure. Because the bars and clubs are packed, criminals find them appealing locations to practice committing crimes. Potential criminals would not be successful in their attempts to commit crimes if society took some action to reduce the conduct of crime [27].

The results of this study are expected to provide information to help those who understand the need for crime risk management and individual security, as well as policymakers. The data may also arouse interest in conducting additional research in this area. If the data from this study inspires the academic community, then more research in this field would be considered essential. The review found that people essentially made diverse, purposeful or accidental contributions to their criminal victimisation. In this way, it is advised that neighbourhoods make an effort to guarantee that measures are put in place to ensure that each individual's security is enhanced to reduce the

likelihood of criminal exploitation. People must receive enough training to understand that they must take the necessary steps to take control of the criminal victimisation they have experienced. The majority of self-prevention strategies are straightforward, commonsense actions.

METHODS

This study used a cross-sectional survey. This architecture makes it easier for the researcher to gather data simultaneously from several populations. According to Boba, this type of observational study (also called descriptive research) involves looking at data related to a population at a specific point in time [23]. Researchers usually use these inquiries to determine the population's criminological features and measure the frequency of criminal incidents [24]. Given the close relationship between victimisation and offending, Berg and his colleague think understanding the processes influencing victimisation and offending will yield valuable empirical information in developing victimisation theories.

Table - Risk Factors that Increase Victimisation

Variables	SA		A		N		SD		DA		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Risk Factors for Victimisation												
Walk Alone at night	101	26	171	45	52	14	30	8	23	6	377	100
Walk Home Late	129	34	187	50	31	8	18	5	12	3	377	100
Walk home Drunk	141	37	162	43	15	4	36	10	23	6	377	100
Sleeping by Roadside	84	22	168	45	70	19	37	10	18	5	377	100
Others (specify)												

Notes: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; SD – Strongly Disagree; D – Disagree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study hypothesises that personal security may reduce victimisation by allowing people to take charge of their security concerns. They are acting in a self-serving manner to shield themselves from harm. The level of resident involvement and individual activities control victimisation reduction, allowing residents to enhance personal security by ensuring that the measures they implement lessen victimisation. Although we anticipate that participation will suppress or reverse victimisation, several vital elements will influence the impact and extent of

victimisation reduction. Among these factors is social policy.

- 72% of the respondents revealed that many residents walked home alone at night.
- 80% revealed that quite a few residents walked home drunk at night.
- 67% perceived many residents slept by the roadside while drunk.
- 66% of the respondents observed that many residents in Kajiado County walked home at night.

The research findings indicate that Kenya's security is improving, especially in our homes and workplaces. For this to work, though, every

neighbourhood person must be aware of the precautions they can take to reduce their risk of becoming a victim of criminal behaviour. It is essential to train the locals to understand what actions to take to avoid being victims of crime. The inhabitants must cooperate to let potential thieves know that the residents understand the importance of self-defence. It might be necessary to provide situational crime prevention training to the locals to eradicate the possibility of crime.

CONCLUSIONS

Lastly, given the ongoing unpredictability and self-motivation of security issues across the globe, personal security needs to be improved. Perhaps the most effective form of protection is personal security since individuals are aware of

their own security needs and can take action to remove opportunities for potential criminals to commit crimes; this calls for a more thorough understanding of the policies that must be put in place to reduce the frequency of criminal victimisation incidents.

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