



CRIME VICTIMIZATION OF NEUST CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS LIVING IN BOARDING HOUSES AT SUMACAB ESTE, CABANATUAN CITY

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INTRODUCTION

Being a victim of crime is a phenomenon which may not be common to everyone, but is of great probability of happening anytime in our lives. This is because no one can actually predict and control the actions of other people especially those who intend to commit them. It is therefore important, that for us not be victimized, we have to create a certain kind of security within us, that is, we police ourselves. It is not enough that we depend on our police force for our security, but more importantly, we have to be responsible enough to keep ourselves secure and not put ourselves in a compromising situation that could lead to victimization. In the Philippines, the Philippine National Police (PNP) (2006) stated that they are committed in ensuring public safety and reducing the fear and the incidence of crime in the community. However, they acknowledge that there are many things that each and every community member can do to reduce their chances of becoming a victim or prevent the incidence of crime from happening.

However, it can also be admitted that no matter how much we try to go out our way to avoid being a victim, it somehow happens and most of the time, we are caught off guard, helpless and vulnerable. It has an impact which is certain but varies depends on the extent of victimization which also entices corresponding reaction.

According to Morton & Sangrey (1986), victims will react differently depending upon the level of personal violation they experience and their state of equilibrium at the time of victimization. Victims of non-violent crimes -- such as theft -- may experience less of a personal violation than victims of violent crimes, however, that is not always the case. Homicide is the ultimate violation for a crime victim, and leaves behind the victim's survivors to experience the personal violation.

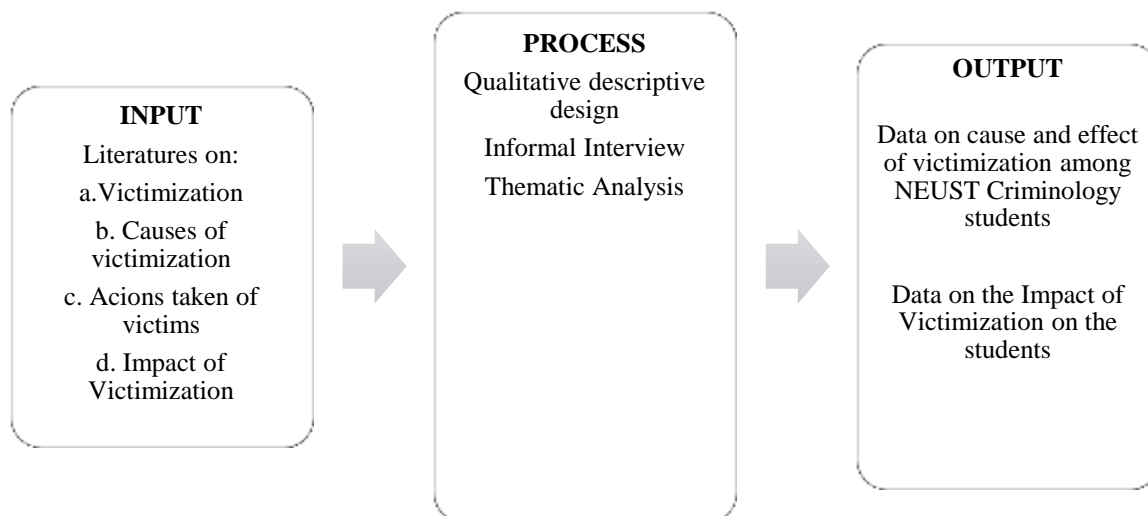
Further, Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime stated that victims may be confused, fearful, frustrated and angry. They want to know why this happened, and why it happened to them. Victims often have no knowledge of who or where to turn in the aftermath of crime. They feel insecure and do not know who to trust or rely on for support, understanding, and help.

Moreover, the impact of crime is perhaps best thought of as a product of the perceived seriousness or intensity of these effects plus their duration from the victim's own standpoint. The 'impact' of a crime has a crucial bearing on the way the victim interprets and responds to it during the second phase of the victimization process, as distinct from whatever tangible or intangible 'effects' may be associated with the primary phase. Unfortunately, most researchers have tended to conflate these two terms and to treat them as interchangeable, which has added to the methodological problems mentioned above, though it might help to account for the seemingly confused nature of many of the findings (Shah, A., n.d.)

As stated in the study of Shah, A. (n.d.) victimization is a highly complex process encompassing a number of possible elements. The first element (often referred to as 'primary victimization') comprises whatever interaction may have taken place between offender and 'victim' during the commission of the offence, plus any after effects arising from this interaction or from the offence itself. The second element encompasses 'the victim's' reaction to the offence, including any change in self-perception that may result from it, plus any formal response that s/he may choose to make to it. The third element consists of any further interactions that may take place between 'the victim' and others, including the various criminal justice agencies with whom s/he may come into contact as a result of this response. Where this interaction has a further negative impact on the victim, it is often referred to as 'secondary victimization'.



Paradigm of the Study



THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Victim Precipitation Theory

The first of these, the victim precipitation theory, views victimology from the standpoint that the victims themselves may actually initiate, either passively or actively, the criminal act that ultimately leads to injury or death. During passive precipitation, the victim unconsciously exhibits behaviors or characteristics that instigate or encourage the attack. Siegel (2006) lists job promotions, job status, successes, love interests, and the like as examples of these unconscious behaviors and characteristics.

The Lifestyle Theory

This theory purports that individuals are targeted based on their lifestyle choices, and that these lifestyle choices expose them to criminal offenders, and situations in which crimes may be committed.

Statement of the Problem

The objective of this Study is to present a Qualitative analysis on the crime victimization of NEUST Criminology students living in boarding houses at Sumacab Este, Cabanatuan City. It specifically answers the following problems:

1. What type of victimization was commonly experienced by the respondents?
2. What were the cause/s of victimization?
3. What was the initial reaction of the respondent after the incident?
4. What is the impact of the victimization towards the victim?

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

Researcher used Qualitative Descriptive research method. It is used in order to discover and identify who, what, and where of experiences and gaining insights into the informant phenomenon is. The researcher used purposive sampling in identifying the respondents.

Locale of the Study

This study will be conducted at Sumacab Este, Cabanatuan City and Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST)-Sumacab Campus.

Data Gathering Tool

The researcher will make use of a self-made interview guide as the main data gathering tool.

The questionnaire will be used to gather basic information regarding the experiences and recollections of the NEUST Criminology students who were victims of crime during their stay in their boarding houses at Sumacab Este, Cabanatuan City.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter of request approved by the University Research Director and VP for Research, Extension and Training. Afterwards, the date, time, and place was set for the one-on-one interviews among the key informants. Mobile phone was used as recorder during the conversation with all the key informants. Also, the criminologist-researchers made use of their criminological and behavioral learnings to observe the key informants before and during the conduct of the interviews.



Treatment of Data

Transcription will be accomplished after the researcher interviewed the participants. The interview will be conducted using an audio recording device and note taking while also maintaining the anonymity of the participants. After transcription, responses will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher will conduct the first-round pass, then organize the codes into sub-code categories and then turn the codes and categories into the final narrative. After all, themes will be generated and finalized. The researcher will include an initial write-up from the supporting statements from other published research and observation from the researcher.

Ethical Consideration

In this study, the researcher ensured the quality and integrity of the research administering an informed consent and assent which will be filled out prior to interview by volunteer key informants. The researchers will set an appointment with the key informants based on their convenient time. The researcher made sure that the questionnaires were showed to the informants to ascertain its acceptability. After the key informants agreed to be part of the study, the researcher will make them sign the interview consent. Rest assured that all data that was gathered were treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. TYPE OF VICTIMIZATION USUALLY EXPERIENCED BY THE RESPONDENTS

1.1 THEFT/STEALING

Based on the result of the study through the responses of the respondents, it was found out that the most common type of victimization that they had experienced is theft or stealing. When asked what type of crime was committed against them, the following were the responses:

R1: "Theft"

R2: "*Nanakawan po ako sa boarding pero dikopo nasaksihan*" (something was stolen from me but I wasn't able to witness how it happened).

R3: "*pag nanakaw ng mga gamit na nakasampay katulad ng mga damit at uniform*" (Stealing of hanged laundry like clothes and uniform)

R4: "*Ang nangyare po na krimen sa akin habang nasa boarding house po ako ay ninakawan po ako ng cellphone sa aming harapan ng room*" (A crime that was committed to me while I was in our boarding house is that my cellphone was stolen in front of our room).

Theft as a crime is generally common not only in boarding houses but in all crime statistics all over the world. In an article on What are the Most Common Crimes in the United States as published by CiminaljusticeDegreeHub.com, statistics obtained from the FBI, shows that a property crime was reported about every three seconds in the U.S., and a violent crime was reported about every 22 seconds. Those are sobering statistics. Contrary to what most people think, property crimes are by far

the most reported crimes in the United States, and Larceny / Theft hits the top of the crime list, far outweighing any other crime

In the Philippines, Region 5 Regional Police Office Crime Statistics Analysis for C.Y. 2019 shows that 43.42% of the Total Index Crimes are Crimes against Persons and 56.58% are Crimes Against Property and theft has the highest percentage of incidence.

People tend to commit theft for so many diverse reasons. Others do so maybe because it is very simple and easy to commit. It doesn't need too much of planning or organization. Sometimes, all the person need is an opportunity. Other may even commit it just for the thrill of doing it. According to Dr. Peter B. Wood et al. ("Motivations For Violent Crime Among Incarcerated Adults"), for some who engage in any criminal activity, whether it be property or violent crime, they do so because they get a rush or a thrill out of engaging in risky behavior (i.e. the risk of getting caught).

Some people do so because they need it. They have no other means to acquire what they want or what they need so they resort to stealing. This can be supported by the idea of conflict theory which holds that crime results from the conflicts in society among the different social classes, and that laws actually arise from necessity as a result of conflict, rather than a general consensus. The fundamental causes of crime are the social and economic forces operating within society.

CAUSES OF VICTIMIZATION

1.2 CARELESSNESS/UNORGANIZED

When respondents were asked what could be the reason why they were victimized, they have these to say:

R1: "**Masyadong burara sa gamit**" (very unorganized when it comes to my things).

R2: "**Wala naman po akong alam na rason kung bakit ako naging biktima siguro po burara pero nakatago naman po sa ilalim ng kama yon**" (I cannot find a reason why is was victimized, maybe because I was unorganized, however, I was sure left it hidden under my bed)

R4: "**Naging biktima po ako dahil sa aking kapabayaang subalit Hindi kopo inaasahan na ganun Lang kabilis mawawala Ang aking cellphone**" (I became a victim because of my carelessness but I didn't expect that my phone will get lost in an instant).

Undeniably, being unorganized and/or careless can be another factor of victimization. When people fail to secure their belongings and forget to put them in a place where it should be kept safe, could result to such loss. In as much as we do not want to resort to victim-blaming, but we can safely say that due to one's carelessness or unorganized ways, it creates an opportunity for criminals to commit their acts. When we leave our belongings unattended, this is the opportunity that one motivated offender needs to easily perpetuate their crimes. And if we do not change these ways of ours, we will remain to be a



suitable target for any criminals who are just waiting around the bend waiting for opportunity.

This was explained by the Routine Activities Theory by Cohen and Felson (1979) which posits that the convergence in time and space of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian provide an opportunity for crimes to occur. It does not attempt to explain participation in crime but instead focuses on how opportunities for crimes are related to the nature of patterns of routine social interaction, including one's work, family, and leisure activities.

1.3 LACK OF SECURITY

R3: “Sa aking tingin ay dahil bukas lamang ang aming gate pataas at walang ilaw sa tapat ng aming tinutuluyan maging ang mga tao ay kokonti lamang ang dumadaan at ilan lang kami nakatita dito” (I think it is because our gate is open going up and there is no light in front of the room where we are staying. There are also few people who are walking there and staying here).

The lack of security installed in boarding houses can be a very significant reason why they are being targeted because thieves are well aware that the security of boarding houses are not that strict. Some owners of boarding houses usually fail to install needed security equipment and that has become a common knowledge among criminals that is why they are most likely to target boarding houses.

Further, boarding houses tend to be very accommodating of different group of individuals and with the number of boarders renting per building, it easily creates security breach. People going in and out of the building is not strictly being monitored since visitors are usually allowed to enter. In an article of Sunstar Philippines, it stated that boarding house is the most accessible place for young people to meet. There's no checking of ID's at the gates or doors. No frisking. The security personnel are out of the house or watching TV at the adjacent house. They will speak to the boarders only when it's time to collect rent. Curfew applies only to some. Strangers are not welcome only to few (Fernando, 2018).

Another study conducted in Davao City wherein an observable statistics of university students from neighboring provinces and the city's outskirts live in temporary residences. However, reports reveal that these housing facilities, most of the time, fail to consider students safety and welfare (Brilliantes, R. et. Al, 2012).

Thus, with the issue on the lack of security in boarding houses, we can say that these students are being victimized because they are in “bad areas” as the deviance theory mentioned earlier explained that greater exposure to dangerous places makes an individual more likely to become the victim of a crime (Seigel, 2006).

2. INITIAL REACTION OF RESPONDENTS UPON VICTIMIZATION

After an incident took place, every person has their own way of responding to a certain incident. Basically, we cannot teach one how to react, but we could only hope for the best that one should respond in the most logical manner to avoid further damage. When asked on what was their initial reaction after they found out about the incident, the respondents had these to say:

2.1 REPORT TO AUTHORITIES

R1: “Pumunta po sa brgy. Hall nang sumacab kasama ang landlady nang boarding house namin para ipa-blotter ang insidente sapagkat nandon po ang ilan sa aking mahalagang gamit tulad nang ID” (I went to the Barangay hall of Sumacab Este along with the landlady of the boarding house where I am staying to report the incident (Blotter) because some important belongings of mine is inside that bag like my ID).

This is indeed one of the most logical moves. Reporting the incident to the nearest authorities especially if we wanted to report that something important is missing. A missing ID is a big deal, and reporting it could save someone from further issues when such is used in committing illegal acts. Also, reporting such incident may be helpful for possible recovery of stolen items.

In an article entitled After the Worst Has Happened: The actions taken when a theft is discovered can help aid in a successful cargo recovery (Gruke, 2014), stated that when the theft is first discovered, what Marino calls the “a-ha moment” there is one step that needs to be taken right away: calling 9-1-1. Using the emergency number as soon as possible gets the ball rolling on the investigation immediately. Waiting to call the police, or calling them after calling head office, puts an unnecessary impediment in the recovery efforts.

Moreover, reporting crime is necessary because it can help not only the victim but the community in general. Merely reporting a certain incident can alert not only the authorities but also the people within the area to be more careful and to be on guard.

Australian Police (2020) made an appeal stating that when reporting a crime people should do it straight away, to give the police at least a fighting chance to apprehend the offender (s).

2.2 SEARCH FOR LOSS BELONGINGS

R2: “Hinalukay kopo yung Wallet na malaki baka tumaob o nabuksan lang yung wallet pero wala padin po akong Makita” (I searched my wallet hoping that my jewelry just fell off but still, I can't see it).

R4: “Ang ginawa kolang po ay nakitawag ako SA kaibigan para ma trace Yung cp ko pero wala po hindi kona po nahanap maaaring pinatay na niya po ang cp ko kaya hindi Kona matawagan. Nung matapos po Ang pagkawala



ng cp ko ako po ay nalungkot dahil andun po Yung mga files ko na need sa pag aaral” (what I did is I called my phone using my friend’s phone hoping that we can trace it but I can no longer find it, I think they turned off my phone already that’s why we can no longer call it. After my phone got lost, I became sad because I have files on my phone which I need in my studies).

From the moment that one learned that something is missing from their belongings, initial reaction actually is to look for it. And while looking for it, a lot of thoughts will be going through one’s mind. Whether they may have misplaced it and forgot where they have placed it. And while they’re at that, as the search continues without success, it slowly sinks in. Eventually, one will reach the realization that they indeed lost it somewhere, or someone took it.

McEntire (2020) in her article wrote that it is easy to panic if you’ve lost something (or worse, it’s stolen from you). The good news is it’s possible to recover stolen items. You just need to know how to start searching. Just like when your phone is missing, you might feel lost too.

Clearly, searching for lost item is the first step before actually getting the police involved. This is to make sure that it is indeed stolen and not just misplaced or lost.

2.3 OVERTHINKING

R3: “Ako ay nag oobserba at nag iisip kung sino ang maaring gumawa ng krimen” (I end up observing and thinking who could be the one who is committing these crimes).

On the other hand, other people respond to such incident in a different way. Others don’t intend to report or deliberately look for whatever was stolen from them, but they work their minds out. Overthinking on the possibilities on who, how and why such thing was committed against them.

However, on a more serious note, one article stated that following the initial shock of being victimized, the psychological impact may cause a victim to go through a period of disorganized activity. They may have distressing thoughts about the event, trouble sleeping. They may use substance abuse as a coping mechanism and withdraw socially. They may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Victimization Consequences: Emotional, Psychological & Social, 2018).

3. IMPACT OF VICTIMIZATION

The trauma of victimization can have a profound and devastating impact on crime victims and their loved ones. It can alter the victim’s view of the world as a just place and leave victims with new and difficult feelings and reactions that they may not understand. It is important for victim assistance professionals to understand the different ways that crime can affect victims—psychologically, financially, physically and spiritually. Any discussion of the impact of crime on victims is necessarily general in scope (Wasserman and Ellis, 2010).

3.1 BECAME SECURITY CONSCIOUS

R1: “Natuto po akong maging masinop sa lahat nang bagay” (I learned to better organize and secure all of my things).

R1: “Palagian na po akong nagchecheck nang mga gamit ko at nilalagay na sa locker para maiwasan maulit ang insidente (I always check all my belongings and put them inside my locker to avoid the incident from happening again).

R2: “Naging masinop po ako at hindi na burara” (I learned to be more secured and organized).

R3: “Naging mas maingat at natakot ako na baka hnd lang yon ang gawin sa akin dahil alam na nya pumasok sa aming tinitirhan” (I became more careful and fearful that they may do other things because they already know how to enter our place).

R3: “Ginagawan ko ng harang ang papasok at binibisita tuwing may naririnig akong ingay sa taas” (I make sure that I put a barricade for incoming visitors everytime I hear some noise from upstairs).

R4: “Ang naging action po na ginawa ko ay nag ingat na po ako SA aking mga gamit at Hindi Napo ako kagad kagad nagtiwala sa mga nakakasama ko” (what I did is I became more careful when it comes to my belongings and I no longer trust the people around me too easily).

Being a victim of a crime, almost always leave a person with the realization that somehow, they may have contributed to their victimization, like being careless for instance. With this realization, one will learn their lesson and eventually settle to change their ways so as to prevent further or future victimization.

Guilt or self-blame is common. Many victims believe they were “in the wrong place at the wrong time.” If the victim does not have someone to blame, they will often blame themselves. Guilt is also common when no offender is found. Later on, when reflecting upon the crime, victims might feel guilty for not doing more to prevent what happened (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2005).

Being security conscious if one had been careless, could be an example. Changing their careless ways and adopting a more security conscious lifestyle can go a long way in protecting oneself and eliminating opportunities for criminals to perpetuate their criminal ways.

On a study conducted by Fuller, G. (2015) one psychological impact of victimization is hypervigilance. Hypervigilance is a condition where the individual remains in a consistently aroused state in response to real or perceived threats. For one victim who was attacked in his home by a gang, the fear of being attacked again was paramount. His primary hypervigilant behaviors included becoming hyperaware and constantly scanning for the offenders when out in public (PA1194).



3.2 BECAME NERVOUS/FEARFUL

R2: “Kinabahan lang po ako kase magagalet mama ko. Wala naman pong masamang naging epekto” (I just got nervous because my mother will get mad. No bad effect at all)

R3: “Naging mas maingat at natakot ako na baka hnd lang yon ang gawin sa akin dahil alam na nya pumasok sa aming tinitirhan “(I became more careful and fearful that they may do other things because they already know how to enter our place).

On the other hand, one respondent admitted that there is really no bad effect on her at all except that she is afraid that she may get scolded by her mother. According to Morton & Sangrey (1986), victims will react differently depending upon the level of personal violation they experience and their state of equilibrium at the time of victimization.

To feel terror or fear following a crime that involved a threat to one’s safety or life, or to someone else a victim cares about. It can last for quite some time following the commission of a crime and under certain circumstances, it can become debilitating. Fear or terror that becomes overwhelming is unhealthy and victims should consult their family physician about it as soon as possible (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2005).

3.3 BECAME SAD

R4: “Ang naging epekto po sa akin ng pangyayari nayun ay nalungkot po ako dahil nawalan po ako ng cp at andun din po lahat ng mga files na need ko sa ibat ibang subject (the effect of the incident is that I felt sad because I lost my phone and that all my files which I need for my different subject are there).

For some reasons, being sad is one normal reaction after one experienced an untoward incident. In most instances when we lose something that is very important to us and we become aware that we have no means of getting it back, we become sad. It usually occurs to a person after fear. Being sad can be considered as another psychological and or emotional impact, although in this particular case, it is not as serious as having trauma or post-traumatic disorder. However, the idea of being impacted psychologically and emotionally is not something that can be disregarded because if not addressed properly, it definitely can accelerate to a more serious disorder.

Dinisman, T and Moroz, A (2017) in their book Understanding Victims of Crime exemplified this when they stated that a mere handbag snatching can produce not only financial but also emotional, long-term effect on victims.

3.2 DEVELOPED TRUST ISSUES

R4: “Ang naging action po na ginawa ko ay nag ingat na po ako sa aking mga gamit at Hindi Napo ako kagad kagad nagtiwala sa mga nakakasama ko” (what I did is I became more careful when it comes to my belongings and I no longer trust the people around me too easily).

Finally, it can also be believed that when a person becomes a victim of a crime, they have the tendency to develop

trust issues towards other people. Part of them, being security conscious may tend to lean on having a very suspicious behavior towards others. Somehow, there is a thin line between being secured and being too suspicious. This can lead to anti-social behavior if it becomes persistent to a certain degree that the person can no longer maintain a healthy relationship with others because they choose not to trust anyone instead.

In addition, social withdrawal is another common behavioral change. Criminal victimization may cause individuals to have feelings of shame, guilt and self-hate (Barton & Bartol, 2011). Moreover, the victims develop mistrust against the society and even friends and family. This is very common among victims of rape and violent robbery (Roy et al., 2014). This will eventually lead to social withdrawal, where victims prefer to lock themselves in solace and stay away from the rest of the society.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Theft is basically a common crime being perpetrated among boarding houses because of lack of security.
2. Security consciousness, is not among the priority of most students, despite them being Criminology students.
3. Crime victimization impact on NESUT Criminology students were not too serious, but raised self-awareness on security consciousness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be a review on the implementation of boarding house owners on the security guidelines prescribed by the City government to monitor and determine those who are not compliant and demand them to comply immediately or if not give sanctions as prescribed by the ordinance.
2. Continuous reminder among students regarding their role on their victimization, such as to consider everyday precautions and security measures whenever they are in their boarding houses.
3. Result of the study can be furnished to the barangay for them to enhance their in-policing efforts in order to maintain the safety and security, not only of the students but of all residents within the said barangay.
4. Periodic monitoring and counselling of students impacted by victimization should be enhanced through the College’s Guidance counsellor to prevent issues which may be present from escalating into a more serious problem for the student.

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