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CAUSES OF VICTIMIZATION: COPING UP WITH ITS EFFECTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study, is to understand the concept of victimization, as to how and why it occurs and what are the effects towards the victims. To be able to understand and formulate recommendations which will prevent further victimization, through the conduct of Programs and Seminars. Also to encourage citizens to improved self – vigilance. Furthermore, it could help other researchers who would conduct similar study.

This study is qualitative research, and specifically considered as a case study. It is a case study, because it is an effective methodology to investigate and understand complex issues in real world settings (Harrison, H. et al., 2017). In addition, the purpose of case study must be to answer "how" or "why" questions, investigator must have little control over events, and the focus of the research must be on present – day phenomenon within a real-life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. According to Creswell (2013). It is aimed to be understand in the perspective of the Subjects within the Province of Pangasinan.

KEYWORDS: *Victimization, Victimology, Victim, Coping Mechanism, and Crime.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Stephen Schafer, one of the earliest victimologist, that people has the responsibility to avoid the provocation of others into committing a crime against them, and also they should prevent it from its occurrence (Introduction to Victimology, 2020).

In addition, crimes may randomly occur, but there are factors which could increase the chance of an individual to be victimized. One of the factors is Lifestyle Choices, wherein depending upon the choice that was made. The higher the risk of being victimized (Understanding Victimization Risk: Lifestyle Factors & Routine Activities, 2014).

Those aforementioned statements, highly emphasized how victims plays role to their victimization. But in present, victim blaming is not an acceptable reason why victimization occurred in our Society. It is due to the reason that many victims suffered from adverse effect of being victimized. Hence, people believed that only sympathy shall be shown to them. Therefore, we should show sympathy to those who were victimized, and what are they suffering from.

In support, Victimization is an unfortunate experience which may cause damage to the physical or mental integrity of individuals or deprive them of property, causing distress or even trauma. Victimized persons are faced with the task of adapting to and coping with the harm or deprivation caused by acts of crime, According to Folkman et al., as Cited by Janssen, H.J et al,(2020).

In addition, Victims suffers from the greatest and most direct impacts of violent crime. The traumatic experience of being a victim itself may cause severe pain and suffering either physically or mentally, and in many cases this is actually the greatest impact of the crime. It may result to trauma, long term work loss or decrease in earning, a student who were victimized may suffer from lost education or decreased performance in school, (Impact of violent victimization in Canada, 2012).

According to Davis (2021), there are three effects that may occur these are emotional, psychological and social consequences. First is Emotional Impact, this pertains to feeling of anger or fearful, an individual may feel angry why did they become a victim of crime and become fearful in experiencing the same situation. Second is Psychological Impact, Victims may suffer from post-traumatic syndrome. Hence some of them will try to escape from the situation they are suffering, they will try to forget all the bad experience they have encountered when they were victimized. Some of them use a bad habit with negative impact to themselves as a coping mechanism, like alcoholism. Lastly is the Social Impact, victims may feel uncertainty with the environment. Hence, they may attempt to isolate themselves from society, with the fear of being victimized again. Being surrounded by people may cause distress to them. That may lead to struggles or problems for the victim and lastly difficulties on the performance of their work that it may affect to their daily living. Furthermore, victimization triggers many normal emotional responses: anger, rage, anxiety, fear, depression and so forth, according to Kirchoff as cited by (Introduction to Victimology, 2020).

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In addition, the effects of victimization are more threatening they affect a victim psychologically, as they do not only affect the case, but may also affect the victim to the point where he/she might become a criminal himself/herself, According to Aleena Francis et al.(2016).

It is due to anger they might feel and the vengeance they want when they feel that they do not achieved satisfaction in justice they have achieved regarding to their victimization. Furthermore, the victim faces many different challenges: the shock of being victimized, dealing with the police and courts, the reactions of others, returning to "normal," feeling unsafe, self-blame and many more. Researchers note that victims don't seem to return to pre- crime levels of stress, although they can manage to function relatively well. Although the passage of time may give a victim the opportunity to return to a "normal" life, victimization appears to have long-lasting effects (Hagemann 1992; Norris et al. 1997; Resick et al. 2002; Gilboa- Schechtman and Foa 2001; Norris et al. 1997; Government of Canada, 2021).

In support, to better understand how hard for victim his/her experience, we should understand trauma, it typically refers to the damage done to the biological, psychological and social aspect of an individual as a result of multiple stressors, according to Peterson. Consequently, it has powerful and overwhelm effect, and threatens the safety and security, according to Puleo and McGlothlin. Furthermore, traumatic events damages the very basic perception of victims about themselves and the world they live – in, according to Jannoff – Bullman (Introduction to Victimology, 2020).

Moreover, although many individuals suffered from victimization in different parts of the world, majority of them overcome it. Victims seek help from friends, family, a member of the clergy, a counselor, or a victim assistance professional. Keeping himself/herself with someone to talk to vent out what they feel, whenever they were being overwhelmed or feel panicked about their situation (FBI, 2016). In such way they were able to calm themselves.

Apart from this, there those that avoid help, it is in relation with the active behavioral avoidance. Although avoidance is at best a temporary solution, but at worst, it ineffective and harmful to the victim (Scarpa et al. 2006; Government of Canada, 2021). Furthermore, victims who initially avoid social contacts may have increased problems, in contradiction with social support as positive coping strategies. This means that without the help from others, the victim may have hard time in overcoming his/her trauma from victimization.

In addition, victim changes his/her normal way of thinking, memory, identity or his perspective to environment. Although normally people undergo to this change, people who suffered from trauma like that of victimization also used it as a coping strategy. Furthermore, some think of it as a natural way of dealing with trauma. But at some point, dissociation may cause negative effect to the victim. Being used for too long may cause emotional numbing and confusion which will likely to interfere in dealing with trauma (Martínez- Taboas and Bernal 2000; Halligan et al., 2003) as cited by Government of Canada (2021).

The importance of this study, is that it aims to understand the concept of victimization, as to how and why it occurs and what are the effects towards the victims. To be able to understand and formulate recommendations which will prevent further victimization, through the conduct of different Programs and Seminars which will raise the awareness of Individuals against victimization, and in worst – case – scenario if they were victimized. They will be able to overcome the after – effect of victimization. Also to encourage citizens to improved self – vigilance. Furthermore, it could also help other researchers who would conduct similar study, which could serve as basis for their study.

Objective/s of the Study

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the reason why a person suffers from becoming a victim of crime.
2. To determine the effect of victimization to the person and the way they interact to society.
3. To determine self-intervention they have made to overcome after-effect of victimization.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative research, and specifically considered as case study. It is a case study, because it is an effective methodology to investigate and understand complex issues in real world settings (Harrison, H. et al., 2017). In addition, the purpose of case study must be to answer "how" or "why" questions, investigator must have little control over events, and the focus of the research must be on present – day phenomenon within a real-life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. According to Creswell (2013), it is in relation with the aim to understand the causes of victimization and its effect towards victim. It is in relation with the aim to understand the causes of victimization and its effect towards victim. Furthermore, a combination of intensive in – depth interview and case studies were used, as we aim to investigate and understand the complex causes of victimization and its effects from those who suffered from victimization and will be based on literatures or illustrative cases which contains information related to our research topic.

Specifically, the Subjects were Victims of Crime and were be chosen using Incidental Sampling. The topic that the researchers have chosen is sensitive, hence it was only normal that only few individuals will be participating with us. Therefore, the participants were chosen on whose willing and available to participate with our study, in respect to their freedom to choose.

Consequently, this has became a constraint and limitation for our study, and the researchers has combine Incidental sampling to Quota sampling, to set a minimum number of respondents

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that will preserve the reliability of our study. In gaining their consent for participation, a request letter was given to the participants, before the conduct of their interview.

After the data were collected through the conduct of interview Thematic Analysis was used to carefully analyze the data. The responses were tabulated and organized based upon the questions it responded with, and themed and categorized based on the ideas that they are portraying in relation with our study causes of victimization. It is to ensure the accuracy of the treatment of data for its interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. The data pertains to the narratives of participants based on their experiences from becoming a victim of crime and what coping mechanism they have used to overcome the trauma they have experienced after they were victimized.

1. What are the causes of victimization?

SOCIAL INTERACTION

In relation with the narrations of Participants 2, 3, and 5, it has manifested social interaction. This is reflected on the acts and situations involved therein, which led to their victimization.

According to Participant 2, It started because of basketball and we have encountered in stream, he suddenly punched me and with his accomplices they started teaming up and beat me. On the other hand, according to Participant 3, I got involved in a trouble sir, in a stream. My companion sir, it was his enemy, he suddenly got punched. While according to Participant 5, there was an occasion in our barangay, I am with my friends, we were drinking, then suddenly there was someone who came at us, I was singing and he suddenly grabbed the mic and when I did not give it to him, he punched me.

EXPOSURE TO OPEN ENVIRONMENT

In relation with the narrations of Participants 1, 4, and 6, it depicts exposure to open environment. This is reflected on the geographical location of where the crime occurred, a factor that led to their victimization.

According to Participant 1 It happened in front of our house, along the highway. In relation to the narration of Participant 4, during that time, we were on our way home from school and walking in a narrow street, known for being dangerous to public. After that I remember that there are three men following us and then it caught in my mind to rush going at terminal of public transportation. While based on the narratives of Participant 6, I am on my way home from a party, when I am walking in a corner of a street it just happened, there was a knife pointed at me.

2. What are the experiences of the victims?

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

According to the narratives of the participants, physical and emotional trauma are being experienced due to their victimization. This is reflected on the fear, anxiety and injuries due to the incident they have suffered from and affects their daily lives.

Based on the narrative of Participant 1, she narrated I have suffered from slight physical injury and mild trauma due to impact of collision. As per the narratives of Participant 2 The place where Im going became limited and it has caused trauma on my part, whenever I'm seeing people loafing around I feel nervous.

In accordance with the response of Participant 3, he narrated the event has caused physical injury and fear, because they have threatened me.

In relation with the narration of Participant 4 she narrated, when it happened, when it was still fresh from my mind, I felt afraid, because it was my first time being victimized of stealing, because I don't know what will happen next, but not I'm able to move on from what happened.

According to Participant 6, I have felt afraid, since it was the first time that I have experienced it and until now I still remember the feeling when it happened.

3. What are the coping mechanism used by the victims?

SELF – SUPPORT

According to Participant 1, it was in relation with self–support. It was manifested through the act she did to deal with the Physical Trauma she suffered in. According to her Self-care because of the bruises I got.

POSITIVE MINDSET AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Based on the narrative respondent, Positive Mindset and Religious belief was manifested as a coping mechanism in dealing with the after – effect of victimization. This was reflected on the mindset and faith of the respondent.

According to participant 6, Maybe because of positive thinking and faith, and the belief that everything happens for a reason. I am able to move on and overcome my fear.

AVOIDANCE

Based on the narratives of participant 2 and 3, social avoidance was manifest. This was identified through their behaviors, as a coping mechanism to overcome the after – effect of victimization.

According to Participant 2, As part of my psychological healing process, I distance myself to others by staying at my room. While in accordance to narration of participant 3, I have just avoided others sir.

OTHER COPING MECHANISM

According to the participant's narrative, to cope up with the effect of victimization, you can choose to stay motivated and study hard , This is reflected in the participant's sense of Defense mechanism ,also called (Active / Positive coping) was developed to understand coping options after the incident of victimization . In the sense that can help victims effectively use time in exploring choices and learn a coping strategies appropriate to their situation.

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According to participant 4 , I have overcome the after effect of victimization by exerting more effort in studying .

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions:

1. Victimization may happen from exposing one's self to environment and through engagement with other people,
2. Experiencing victimization may affect both physical and mental well-being of an individual
3. In dealing with victimization there are coping strategies that could help individual to overcome the effects of victimization. While some, if maladaptively used may have bad effect in individuals. But it may vary, depending upon the way such strategies have been utilized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In relation with the findings and conclusions of this research, the following are recommended:

1. On the part of the citizens, they are encouraged to become vigilant especially in situation that would put them at risk of becoming a victim of crime or places where crime could possibly occur.
2. To conduct Community Awareness Programs, which will specifically tackles how and why victimization or crime occurs and how should they deal with it when they have experienced it. In order to raise the awareness of every citizen to prevent further victimization and be able to overcome its effect when they have experienced it. It is in relation with encouragement to become more vigilant, as it will serve as basis on what courses actions should be done by individuals to avoid becoming a victim of crime.
3. To increase Police Visibility within areas where crime usually occurs, which could be determine through utilization of Crime Mapping and Crime Clock.

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