



CRIME PREVENTION PRACTICES OF SHOPPING MALLS IN THE PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA: AN ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study is focused on the evaluation of the crime prevention practices of shopping malls located in five (5) cities in the Province of Nueva Ecija within the year 2019. It particularly emphasized on crime occurrences, implementation of crime preventive measures, and crime prevention practices. Using a descriptive method of research and validated questionnaire-checklist as the main tool of gathering data from a randomly selected respondents the researchers concluded that shopping malls in the Province of Nueva Ecija are prone to criminal victimizations. Crime prevention measures and practices, security programs and procedures, though implemented at the highest degree, are not sufficient or workable to curtail and prevent criminal activities. Also, the limited security practices and crime prevention programs of shopping malls open the gate of criminal victimization most particularly on Crime Against Persons.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the signs of healthy economy in a particular community or society is the noticeable continuous growth of business. Business provides employment; also, taxes from it could be used by a government for social services of its people. Likewise, business is extremely important to a country's economy because businesses provide both goods and services and jobs (eNotes Editorial, 17 February 2015). However, entwined to it is the security or safety of business establishments, employees, operators, owners, and clients which is a foremost concern. Logically, a capitalist or even operators of small medium enterprises (SMEs) would not pursue establishing business in a certain area if there are security issues or problems. A crime free society is a reflection of law enforcers' competence in terms of crime prevention. In fact, the 9th Principle of Policing by Robert Peel stated that "the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder..." (UK Government, 10 December 2012). Reasonably, a society that maintains law and order attracts people and entrepreneurs; hence, crime prevention is an investment.

The progress of SMEs or big businesses is dependent on the crime preventive action or condition

of a certain area. Crime prevention according to Van Dijk and De Waard (1991) refers to the total of all private initiatives and state policies, other than the enforcement of criminal law, aimed at the reduction of damage caused by acts defined as criminal by the state. Also, UNODC (2010) defined it as strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes. But then, crime is unavoidable; Hubert and Wright (1982) mentioned that according to Durkheim, he suggested that the condition that generates crime is inevitable ("normal") and desirable. Hence, businesses cannot avoid destruction of property, theft, robbery, shoplifting, vandalism and other crimes that may cause injuries clients, employees, and employers. In support thereto, based on Dempsey (2010) as mentioned by Chris Mcgoey, the most common violent crimes committed in the parking lot are stranger-on-stranger purse snatch and strong-arm robbery and occasionally carjacking and abductions. Survey of Tilley (1993) revealed that there were high rates of re-victimization amongst businesses targeted for burglary. Wood, Wheelwright, and Burrows (1997) found out that the



sector most vulnerable to burglary was manufacturing, and many incidents were concentrated around a few victims. Also, the 1997 UK Small business crime initiative found 3.3 per cent of respondents had been the victim of a successful robbery, and 4.5 per cent had experienced an attempted robbery, with the majority of businesses affected being retailers. Eijken and Mijer (1995) crime survey on 1989 Dutch Commercial demonstrated that one in five establishments had been victims of burglary, and that there was a strong likelihood of repeat victimization. Also, Johnston, Leitner, Shapland, and Wiles (1994) study of crime on industrial estates (undertaken in 1990 in the UK) found that 26 per cent of respondents had suffered vandalism, with few incidents reported.

Businesses and establishments also in the Province of Nueva Ecija are susceptible to a variety of crimes. Though Nueva Ecija ventures primarily on variety of agricultural business SMEs, shopping malls, hospitals, banking, financial institutions continue to proliferate most especially in its five (5) cities. The surge of businesses in the Province may possibly parallel the increase of business-related crimes. According to Philippine News Agency (20 July 2017) in the year 2017, the Nueva Ecija Police Provincial

Office (NEPPO) recorded 231 cases of theft were recorded, followed by physical injuries (230), robbery (200), car theft (134), rape (90), murder (81) and homicide (12) though incidence of crime decreased by 43.31 percent in the year 2018 (Arcellaz, 26 March 2018). For this reason, the researchers sought to determine the crimes and crime prevention measures being implemented by shopping malls in the Province. Hence, the researchers offer the following problems:

1. How may the Crime Occurrence be described as Perceived by Mall Representatives and Tenant-Respondents in terms of:
 - a. Crimes against Public Morals;
 - b. Crimes against Persons; and
 - c. Crimes against Properties?
2. How may the Implementation of Crime Preventive Measures be described as Perceived by Mall Representatives and Tenant-Respondents in terms of:
 - a. Punitive Prevention
 - b. Environmental Prevention; and
 - c. Mechanical Prevention?
3. What are the crime prevention practices being used by Shopping Malls?

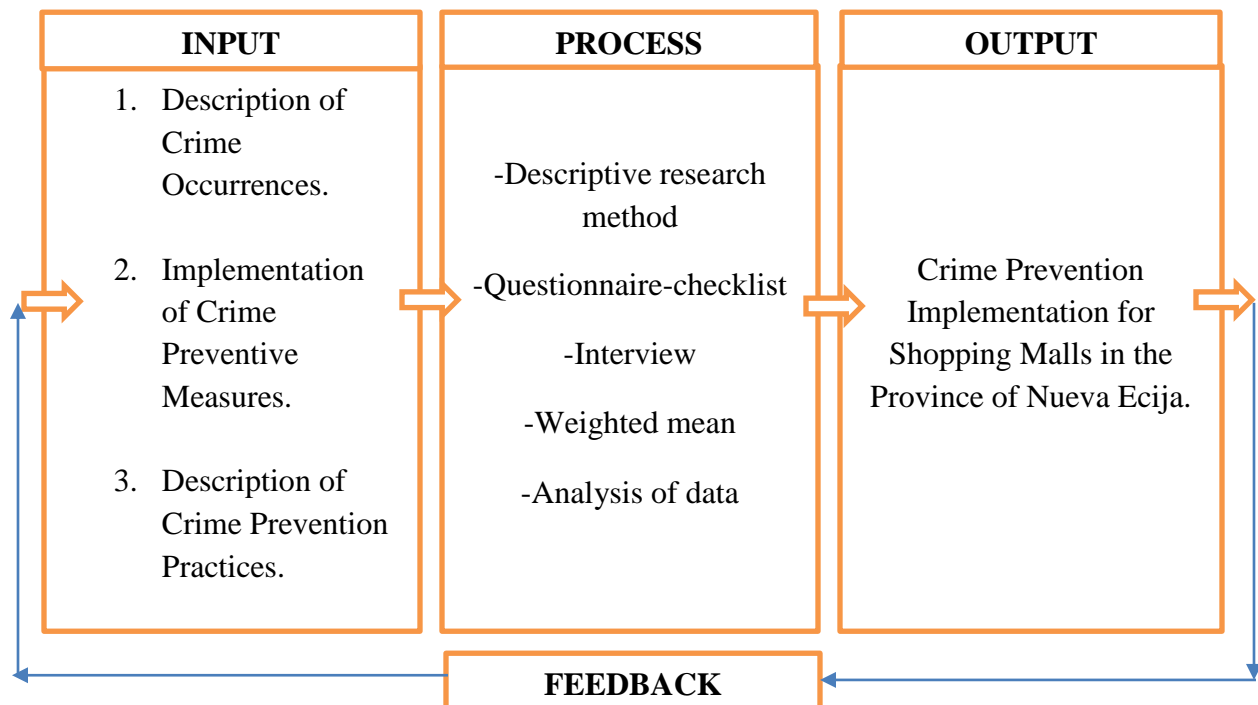


Figure 1. Research Paradigm



2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used the Descriptive Survey Method. As cited by Eduardo (2018), descriptive method is a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, trends and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without the aid of the statistical methods. Also, according to Pagandian and Eduardo (2019) citing Kumar, this method can systematically describe a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or programs,

Scale	Range Values
4	3.26- 4.00
3	2.51- 3.25
2	1.76- 2.50
1	1.00- 1.75

3. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

3.1. Crime Occurrence as Perceived by Mall Representatives and Tenant-Respondents in terms of Crimes against Public Morals, Crimes against Persons, and Crimes against Properties

or provides information or describes the attitude towards an issue. Hence, the Method is appropriate to the study. Self-prepared and validated questionnaire-checklist was the main gathering tool supplemented by interview. The 200 respondents (tenants, proprietors/employers, mall representatives, employees, citizens in the area) were identified through simple random sampling only in the five (5) cities of Nueva Ecija in the year 2019 namely: San Jose City, Science City of Munoz, Cabanatuan City, Palayan City, and Gapan City. The following rating scale was used:

Description
Frequently
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

Results in Table 1 shows that all group of crimes occur occasionally in various shopping mall in five (5) cities in the Province. It signifies that the three (3) group of crime occur continuously every month. Crime Against Property ranked 1st with a mean of 3.02; ranked 2nd is Crime Against Public Morals with a mean of 2.92; and ranked 3rd is Crime Against Person with a mean of 2.60.

Table 1. Crime Occurrence as Perceived by Mall Representatives and Tenant-Respondents

Group of Crime	Mean	Description	Rank
Crime Against Public Morals	2.92	Occasionally	2
Crime Against Persons	2.60	Occasionally	3
Crime Against Properties	3.04	Occasionally	1

The findings imply that crime against property really is the chief problem or concern of shopping malls located in the five (5) cities of Nueva Ecija. Interview with the respondents revealed that theft and robbery was the most recurring crime despite of increasing the employment of security guards. It further exposed that most theft incidents happened during daytime (business hours) while robberies usually transpire during nighttime.

3.2. Implementation of Crime Preventive Measures as Perceived by Mall Representatives and Tenant-Respondents in terms of Punitive Prevention, Environmental Prevention, and Mechanical Prevention

Table 2 shows all the five (5) shopping malls implement the three (3) crime preventive measures with means of 3.5, 3.52, and 3.59 described as Frequently for Punitive, Environmental, and Mechanical, respectively. It implies that the malls regularly observe and practice crime preventive measures. It further signifies that mall owners, tenants, and representatives are aware of the possible economic losses that crime may cause.



Table 2. Implementation of Crime Preventive Measures as Perceived by Mall Representatives and Tenant-Respondents

Shopping Mall	Punitive	Description	Environmental	Description	Mechanical	Description
Shopping Mall A	3.59	Frequently	3.67	Frequently	3.68	Frequently
Shopping Mall B	3.48	Frequently	3.53	Frequently	3.60	Frequently
Shopping Mall C	3.54	Frequently	3.60	Frequently	3.64	Frequently
Shopping Mall D	3.30	Frequently	3.08	Occasionally	3.10	Occasionally
Shopping Mall E	3.59	Frequently	3.70	Frequently	3.93	Frequently
Total Mean	3.5	Frequently	3.52	Frequently	3.59	Frequently

However, one (1) among the five (5) shopping malls is found to be quite unresponsive to crime prevention measures. Shopping Mall D has a limited practice in terms of Environmental and Mechanical prevention measures with means of 3.08 and 3.10 respectively described as Occasionally. It suggests that Shopping Mall D could be easily victimized due to limited implementation of crime preventive measures. Interview with respondents exposed that limited budget for security is their major concern such as limited security personnel, lack of security equipment, mall security trainings, seminars, and the like. Moreover, close coordination with nearest police stations is not being observed.

3. Crime Prevention Practices used by Shopping Malls

Table 3 reveals that the five (5) shopping malls practice methods geared towards prevention of crime. Shopping malls regularly practice the *issuance of mall vicinity entry ticket to vehicle owners, retrieval of mall vicinity vehicle entry ticket upon leaving, and visibility of security guards in complete uniform* with means of 4.16, 4.14, and 4.08, respectively described as Frequently. It implies that shopping malls perform crime prevention activities on a consistent and systematic basis. However, installation of numerous light posts around the mall like in the parking area is the lowest with a mean of 3.8 but still described as Frequent.

Table 3. List of Crime Prevention Practices used by Shopping Malls

	Practices	Mean	Description
1	Issuance of mall vicinity entry ticket to vehicle owners.	4.16	Frequently
2	Retrieval of mall vicinity vehicle entry ticket upon leaving.	4.14	Frequently
3	Visibility of security guards in complete uniform.	4.08	Frequently
4	Check in/out register for employees, as well as for suppliers, contractors, and visitors.	4.07	Frequently
5	Baggage checking upon entry in the mall vicinity.	4.03	Frequently
6	Strict and standard security measures.	3.95	Frequently
7	Recording of vehicle plate numbers upon mall vicinity entry.	3.91	Frequently
8	Emergency lights installed in preparation to power failure.	3.83	Frequently
9	Alternative power system installed.	3.82	Frequently
10	Numerous light posts installed around the mall like in the parking area.	3.8	Frequently

The findings imply that shopping malls value the importance of practicing security measures and procedures. Also, it implies that mall owners, tenants, and representatives understand how crime could cause ill effects (economic loss) to their business.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study guided the researchers to conclude that shopping malls in the Province of Nueva Ecija are prone to criminal victimization. Crime prevention measures and practices, security programs and procedures, though implemented at the highest degree, are not sufficient or workable to curtail and prevent criminal activities. Also, the limited



security practices and crime prevention programs of shopping malls open the gate of criminal victimization most particularly on Crime Against Persons.

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