

STREET CRIMES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN JAMSHORO

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Abstract

This study is unique in its perspective of Jamshoro city, as it considers both criminals and victims of street crimes. Through the convenience sampling method, 34 victims of street crimes were selected and interviewed. All the victims were students of the different universities in Jamshoro. The results indicate that all the victims belong to the young age group. It is interesting from the perspective of law and order that culprits used bikes that were unlisted or lacked license plates in their crimes. The timing of the criminal activities was critical, as 79% occurred between 2:00 pm and 7:59 pm. Furthermore, 62% of victims belonged to the University of Sindh Jamshoro. Insight into this type of misfortunate activity suggests that vehicles that are unregistered and/or lack license plates must be banned to control street crimes. There is a great need to polish the image of the police in the public eye. Furthermore, “community policing” may serve better for this purpose.

Key words: *Street Crimes, Jamshoro, Criminals, Victims, Universities, Community Policing, Students, Incidents, Civilized Society, and Public Mistrust.*

Introduction

Crime is a type of social deviance that disregards the rights of individuals. Since ancient times, crime has been an important issue of every society and a high priority in every civilized society. No society can survive without its own value

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system, and crimes disrupt civic values. Generally, street crimes occur in public places or roads. Street crime is one of the biggest problems not only in Jamshoro but also across Pakistan. Every member of the community has his/her own story regarding street crime. Unfortunately, in street crimes, both victims and offenders are often youth. Laptops and mobile phones are key targets of street criminals. People avoid carrying phones in the late-night hours in Jamshoro. Street crimes are common phenomena in Jamshoro due to its multicultural and multiethnic identity. Sometimes, street crimes convey an aspect of terrorism, spreading terror in society. Street crime usually occurs in cities due to their higher population density than that of rural areas, where criminals have less chance to hide (Jalil & Iqbal, 2010). Public confidence in policing is a sensitive research issue for social scientists and policy-makers across the world. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the public is not willing to rely on the criminal justice system, and policy makers do not bother to examine the causes of public mistrust in the criminal justice system. In rural areas, most people know each other, and therefore, street crimes are difficult to commit. Glaeser and Sacerdote (1996) found that there is less chance of recognition and arrest in urban areas. Therefore, street crimes are more serious issues in cities or densely populated areas. In Pakistan, criminologists have not paid proper attention to finding the cause and effect relationship between “crime and poverty”. The main objective of this study is to determine the specific “modus operandi” of street criminals in Jamshoro, Hyderabad.

Literature Review

Policing and the cultural significance of the police have long been subjects of sociological inquiry, and sociologists and the general field of sociology have great interest in understanding policing and its culture (Goldsmith, 2005; Freiberg, 2001; Waddington, 1999). Gumus (2004) found that, in the USA, urbanization and income inequality are important factors of urban crimes. Thomas (1966) identified ethnic heterogeneity and mobility as reasons for crime. Haider and Haider (2006) predicted that the urban population will rise by 140% in Pakistan by 2030, and such unemployed population growth will lead to street crimes becoming a more serious issue. Such fast population growth will create unemployment and force people to indulge in criminality (Jalil & Iqbal, 2010). Siegel (2001) argued that Cesare Beccaria held that it is the personal choice of the individual whether to commit a crime or not. Williams III and McShane (2010) argued that, according to the differential association theory of E. Sutherland, “criminal behavior is learned and as other professions through environment”. Crime portrays the combination of opportunity, values and situation. Crouch (1996) found that individuals from poor families and communities are more likely to rob, steal, become involved in illicit drug selling or make illicit gains. A state

depends on courts, prisons and police to administer justice, punishment and apprehension of criminals for crime deterrence (Jackson & Bradford, 2009). Therefore, social regulations shape the individual's internal motivations, and the law and criminal justice system relies on individuals' motivation for support and cooperation (Hough 2004). Street crimes and violence have been investigated through different socio-psychological, environmental, economic and criminological techniques (Poveda, 2012). Kelly (2000) discussed the link between inequality and crime in the urban counties of the USA and found that the majority of perpetrators live in areas with high inequality and are from the most deprived and marginalized segments of society. Therefore, the perpetrators face high pressure and become involved in criminal activities due to high incentives. Glaeser, Sacerdote, and Scheinkman (1995) proposed that there is a significantly negative link between social interaction and different types of crime; the strength of the link is minimal in crimes against persons such as murder and rape, moderate in some serious crimes and the highest in petty crimes. It has been revealed that poverty and inequality have a significant relationship with homicide rate in the USA (Bailey, 1984). Economic conditions along with motivational thoughts may also trigger the desire to commit a crime when one finds an opportunity (Arvanites & Defina, 2006). The strain theory emphasizes that social strain is pressure individuals face during the achievement of their determined goals (Merton, 1938; Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). Kornhauser (1978) argued that strain is the discrepancy between goals and the methods used to achieve them. Therefore, when people fail to achieve their goals through legitimate means, they use illegitimate means; the pressure that forces them to exercise illegitimate means is strain. The gap between expectations and achievements is called strain (Agnew, 1992). Cohen and Felson (1979) described the routine activity theory. They argued that the incidents of crimes are directly linked to opportunities for criminals and lack of adequate surveillance against criminals by the community. Eck and Weisburd (1995) argued that street crime is usually committed in the places where the offender and the victim hold their routine activities, for example, where they fulfill their basic needs, interact and work.

Locale

Jamshoro city is situated on the right bank of Indus River and is the capital of Jamshoro District, Sindh, Pakistan. There are 03 universities (1. Mehran University of Engineering & Technology 2. University of Sindh, Jamshoro and 3. Liqat University of Health Sciences) in Jamshoro and some times it's called "City of Knowledge" (wikipedia, 2016).

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to determine the method of offending in Jamshoro. Other objectives of the study are as follows:

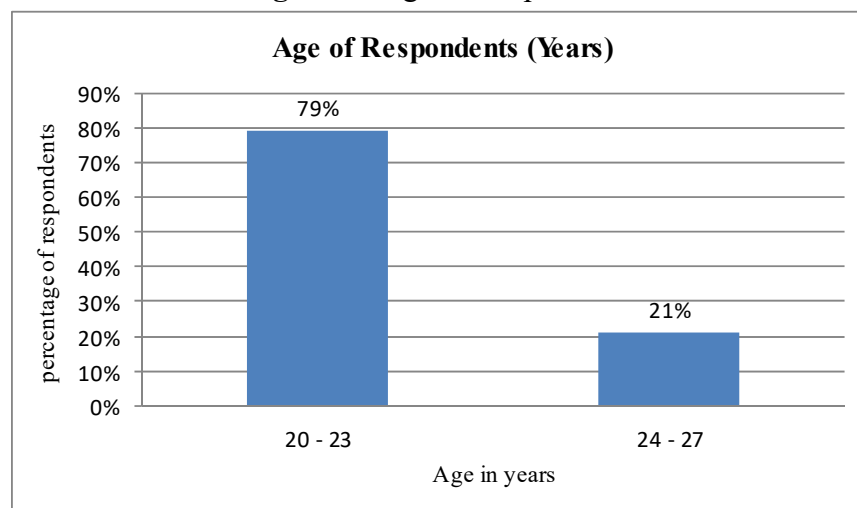
1. To determine the most vulnerable time from the street criminal's point of view.
2. To determine the hotspots for street criminals' offenses.
3. To determine the mobility methods of street criminals and ways to recognize them.

Research Methodology

This is an exploratory study based on primary data with the help of quantitative research techniques. The data were gathered through the convenience sampling method. Thirty-four victims of street crimes, all male (1st January 2016 to 28th February 2017), were interviewed. All the victims were students of the three universities of Jamshoro. Twenty-one respondents belonged to the University of Sindh Jamshoro, 8 from Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, and 5 from Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences. It is useful to measure violence through a broader household survey, which is a low-cost method to gather data that are more accurate than police statistics (Garrett & Ahmed 2004). A self-administered questionnaire was developed and utilized after prerequisite validation.

Results & Discussions:

Figure I: Age of Respondents



Source: Primary Data

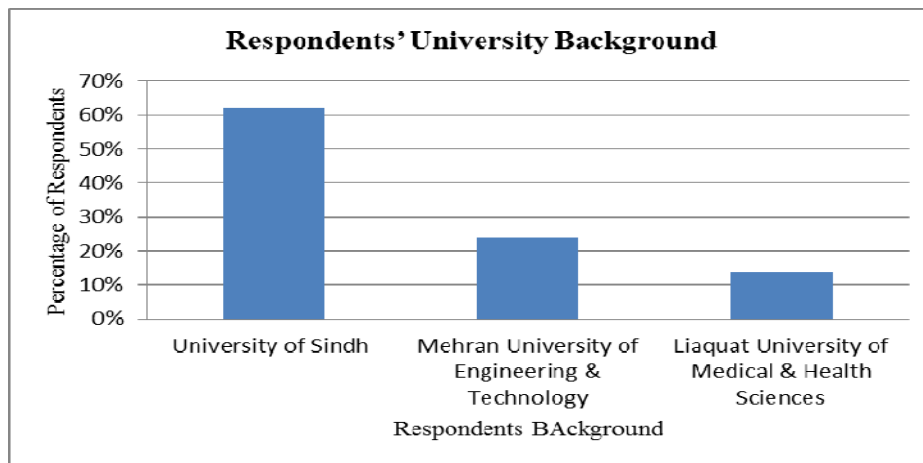
Figure I shows the ages of the respondents. According to the data, the majority of victims, 79%, belonged to the age group 20-23 years, and 21% of the respondents to the age group 24-27 years. The statistics show that most of the victims are young. Usually, young people are both victims and perpetrators of violence (Cruz 1999).

Figure II: Respondent's University Background

Source: Primary Data

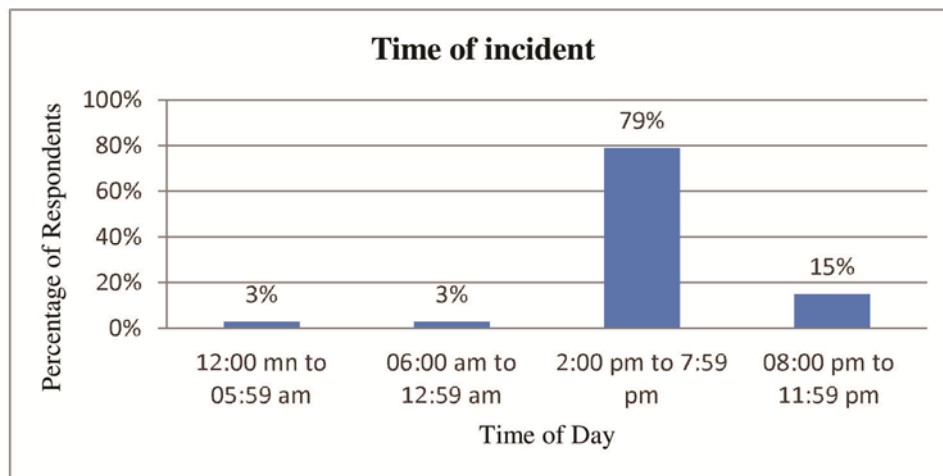
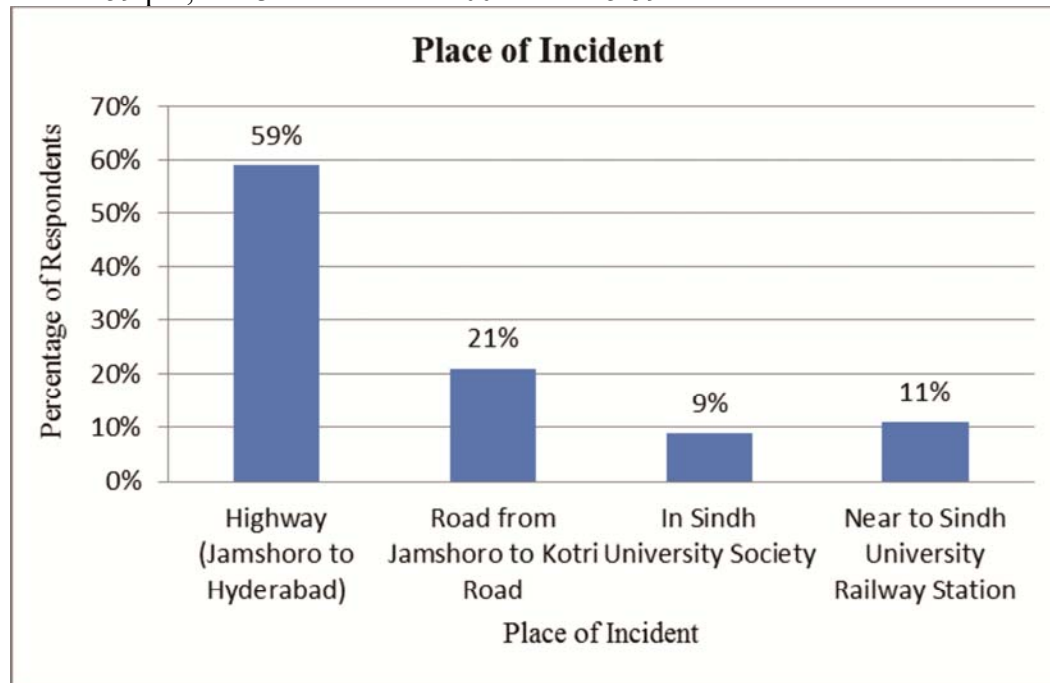
Figure II shows the educational affiliation of the respondents. It indicates that 62% of the respondents belonged to the University of Sindh Jamshoro, 24% to Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, and 14% to the Liaquat University of Health Science.

Figure III: Time of Incident



Source: Primary Data

Figure III shows the timing of the incidents, indicating that 79% of the incidents occurred between 2:00 pm and 7:59 pm, while 15% occurred between 8:00 pm and 11:59 pm, and 3% between 12:00 mn and 5:59 am.



Type of Loss

One hundred percent of respondents lost their money and mobile phones.

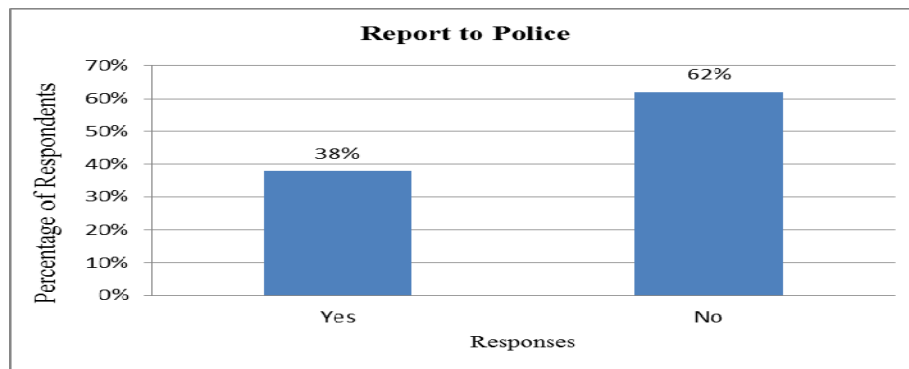
Way of Incident

One hundred percent of the respondents were alone and riding a bike. Suddenly, two bike riders (male) intercepted them and halted them at gunpoint.

Figure IV: Place of Incident

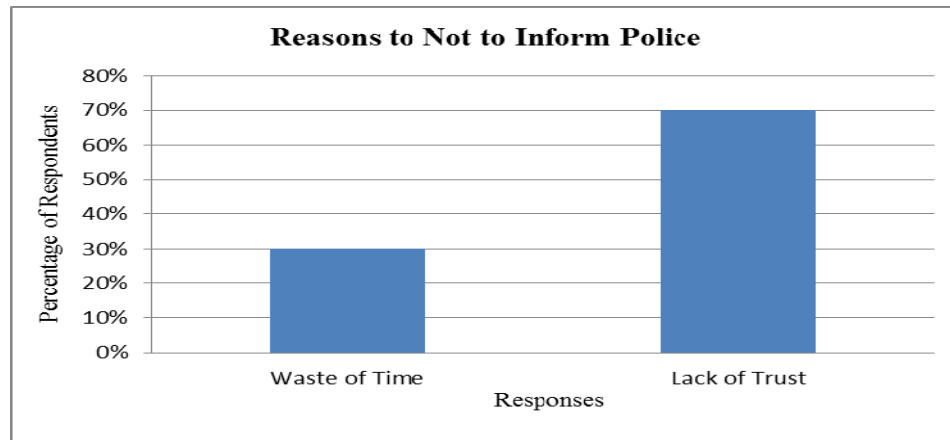
Source: Primary Data

Figure IV indicates the location of the incidents. Most of the incidents, 59%, occurred on a highway, 21% on the road from Jamshoro to Kotri, 11% near Sindh University railway station, Jamshoro and 9% in the Sindh University Society.

Figure V: Information to Police

Source: Primary Data

Figure V shows the respondents' responses as to whether they informed the police about the street crimes they experienced. It indicates that only 38% of the respondents reported to the police, while 62%, representing a large number of victims, did not inform the police for multiple reasons.

Figure VI: Reasons; Not to Inform the Police (n = 62)

Source: Primary Data

Figure VI shows the reasons behind the respondents' decision not to inform the police regarding their victimization. Seventy percent of the respondents said they did not inform the police because they did not trust the police, while 30% felt that informing the police would be a waste of time. The views of the respondents regarding the police are very important. Cao and Dai (2006) argued that views regarding the police show the type of interaction between the police and the public. Policing is difficult without public support, but not impossible (Islam & Ali, 2008). Positive views regarding the police show a positive relationship between the police and the community, which allows more effective policing (Brown & Benedict, 2002). In contrast, negative views highlight resentment among people, which may limit the effectiveness of policing (Goldsmith, 2005).

Role of Police

Thirty-eight percent of respondents shared that they consulted the police. The police wrote down a report on white paper and gave them a copy of the report with a stamp from the police station. They were not contacted by the police, and they did not recover their lost valuables.

Profiling of Criminals:

Usually, 2 criminals between the ages of 23 and 30 years old intercept the victim. They threaten the victim with a pistol and take all of the victim's valuables. It is unfortunate that all the bikes that were used in street crimes lacked license plates. It is noticeable that offenders find opportunities for crime through intentional

searches and during routine non-criminal activities (Rengert & Wasilchick, 1989; Cromwell, Olson, & Avary, 1991).

Conclusion

Currently, street crimes are a threat to the common man and even to peace around the globe. Considering the misuse of stolen mobile phones, every government should strictly control street crimes. As discussed earlier, crime is a major issue of every human society and destroys the social bonds and smooth functioning of society. The researcher used first-hand information of victims of street crimes to determine the method of victimization along with timing, but due to the small number of respondents, the results cannot be generalized. Therefore, it is the duty of the government to gather information from the victims of street crimes by district and develop a mechanism to predict future trends of street crimes. Furthermore, there is a serious need to improve the relationship between the police and the community. Community policing is a valuable solution at the grassroots level to curb crimes.

Recommendations

1. The relationship between the police and the public must be strengthened and made positive.
2. Bikes that are unlisted and lack license plates must not be allowed on roads.
3. The rapid response of the police must be ensured to reduce street crimes.
4. The police and the community must keep watch for unknown or unrecognized people in their respective towns.
5. The promotion of police officials (Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI to Inspector) must be related to their efficiency in resolving criminal cases.

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