

Factors that influenced the commission of crimes: basis for preventive measures

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Abstract: Crime continues to be a global concern, with its persistent rise posing significant challenges to societies worldwide. This study examined the factors influencing the commission of crimes in Lipa City, focusing on mental, social, and economic aspects. Findings revealed that mental health issues, including depression and exposure to violence, significantly contribute to criminal behavior. Social factors such as poverty, family background, and peer influence further exacerbate crime tendencies, while economic challenges like insufficient salaries and rising living costs drive individuals toward illicit activities. The study also identified a uniformity in the perceptions of law enforcement officers across various demographic profiles, emphasizing the role of professional exposure in shaping views on crime. The results align with existing literature highlighting the multifaceted nature of crime. Relative deprivation, economic inequality, and inadequate social conditions were identified as critical drivers of criminal behavior. Addressing these factors through a holistic approach, including economic reforms, mental health interventions, and strengthened community-police relationships, is essential. This research underscores the need for targeted preventive measures to reduce crime rates and foster safer communities, providing a foundation for policymakers and law enforcement to collaborate on effective crime prevention strategies.

Keywords: Crime, Crime Commission, Preventive Measures

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INTRODUCTION

Millions of crimes are recorded every day, almost all across the world. Indeed, its disturbing rise today has alarmed the public to the point where it has become a government concern. In light of all of this, each country has its unique strategy for tackling crime. Indeed, some have banded together to share people, technology, and resources in order to protect their respective countries and citizens against criminals. Nonetheless, despite the efforts, crime continues to occur (Ceccato, 2019).

According to Crawford and Evans (2018) occupational crimes, economic offenses such as fraud and embezzlement, and corporate crimes are examples of white-collar crimes committed by professionals. They are members of a class of people who have a certain level of social standing and make a living from illicit activities. Furthermore, they added that there are a lot of things that people don't realize about how great the temptations of power and money can be for professionals. Overwhelmed by their life's passion and ambition, they would turn to crime.

Crime has effects which are extensive as society itself. It can be as pervasive to development and debasing to the quality of life as personally dangerous, socially damaging, or politically embarrassing. It quiet erosion of national achievement and long term influence on motivation can be far more detrimental to a society that is currently recognized. Crime permeates all aspects of society and, as such, is a form of warfare waged on a world-wide scale, with non-combatants on the losing side (UIA, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to know the Factors that Influence the Commission of Crimes based on the assessment of the PNP Personnel and members of the community with the end view of designing proposed basis for preventive measure.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the factors that influence the Commission of Crimes in Lipa City?
- 2) Is there significant difference in the assessment of respondent on the factors that influenced the commission of crimes in Lipa City when their profile is taken as test factor??

LITERATURE REVIEW

Crime is a multifaceted social phenomenon influenced by a combination of economic, psychological, sociological, and environmental factors. Among the primary drivers is relative deprivation, which is characterized by a sense of frustration and inequality that can lead individuals to engage in criminal behavior. As Burraston et al. (2018) explain, emotional components of deprivation—such as fury, frustration, and apathy—can make individuals irritable and impulsive, often resulting in irrational decisions. This feeling is particularly exacerbated in societies with high rates of income inequality, where individuals compare themselves to more affluent members of the community, leading to economic strain and a propensity toward deviance (Vickery, 2018).

Economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and insufficient means to sustain oneself, are consistently identified as significant contributors to crime. Nair (2021) emphasizes that individuals deprived of basic needs are often driven to criminal activities as an alternative means of survival, particularly in countries with high levels of economic deprivation. Furthermore, deprivation does not solely manifest in material terms but also extends to feelings of inadequacy and frustration, pushing individuals toward illegal activities to meet their needs. This dynamic is evident in crimes like theft, which remains one of the most common offenses in economically challenged areas (National Crime Records Bureau, as cited by Nair, 2021).

Sociological factors also play a pivotal role in influencing criminal behavior. According to Simbulan et al. (2019), personality traits, attitudes, and socio-economic conditions interact with environmental patterns to shape an individual's propensity for crime. Elements such as family background, cultural norms, and systemic inequities, including race and class disparities, contribute to perceptions of criminality. The labeling theory proposed by Tannenbaum (as cited by Ntara, 2023) highlights how societal labels can influence self-perception, leading individuals to conform to these imposed identities, thereby perpetuating criminal behavior.

Moreover, environmental factors, including neighborhood structures and community trust, significantly impact crime rates. Communities with high mobility or low trust in law enforcement often struggle with crime prevention (Vickery, 2018). Proactive approaches, such as increased community policing and better engagement between law enforcement and residents, have shown promise in addressing these challenges (Freeman, 2018). However, proactive strategies must balance effectiveness with concerns about racial profiling and aggressive tactics.

Psychological factors, including mental health issues, impulsivity, and substance abuse, further complicate the landscape of criminal behavior. Richardson et al. (2020) underline the role of psychosocial risk factors in impairing decision-making processes, making individuals more susceptible to deviance. Addiction, in particular, is closely linked to criminal activities, as drug abuse often compels individuals to engage in illegal acts to sustain their dependence (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2019).

Theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights into the drivers of crime. Sutherland's differential association theory suggests that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with individuals who view such behavior as acceptable (Wickert, 2019). Similarly, Hirschi's social control theory posits that weakened social bonds and a lack of commitment to societal norms increase the likelihood of criminal activity (Ntara, 2023). Durkheim's concept of normlessness also underscores the role of societal breakdown in fostering criminal tendencies (Malik & Malik, 2022).

Efforts to prevent crime focus on addressing underlying risk factors and strengthening protective measures. As Austria and Diaz (2019) argue, targeted prevention programs in high-risk areas can be a cost-effective way to reduce crime and victimization rates. Strategies include fostering community trust, improving economic opportunities, and enhancing moral and decision-making capacities among individuals (McClanahan et al., 2019). Proactive policing approaches, such as community engagement and youth programs, aim to reduce opportunities for crime while promoting social cohesion (Freeman, 2018).

In conclusion, crime is influenced by a complex interplay of economic deprivation, social inequities, environmental conditions, and psychological vulnerabilities. Effective prevention requires a holistic approach, integrating economic reforms, community development, and evidence-based policing strategies to address the root causes of criminal behavior. Understanding these factors is crucial for crafting solutions that not only reduce crime but also foster a safer and more equitable society.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This descriptive survey was used to identify the factors that influence the commission of crimes to craft preventive measures. The study was conducted in Lipa City, Batangas. The respondents of the study are the PNP Personnel and members of the community in Brgy Uno, Dos and Tres in Lipa City, who have witnessed and experienced the occurrence of crimes. There were PNP Personnel and Community members. The respondents are qualified for the conduct of the study and will help in gathering clear and relevant conclusions for this research.

There were 35 PNP Personnel who identified the factors that influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City. The data will be gathered in 2024. In selecting the PNP Personnel respondents, stratified random sampling technique will be used. Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata. In stratified purposive sampling, or stratification, the strata are formed based on members' shared attributes or characteristics. To select the community respondents the researcher will use simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a type of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly selects a subset of participants from a population. Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

Instrument

In gathering the needed data, a researcher's made questionnaire checklist was used. The questionnaire-checklist contains series of questions that identified the factors that influence the commission of crime in Lipa City. This focused in three (3) aspects which were mental, social and economic.

Data gathering and analyses

The researcher sought permission from the office of the PNP Officer in Charge assigned in Brgy. Uno, Dos and Tres of Lipa City to administer the questionnaire to the respondents of the

study. When the permission was approved, the researcher sought permission from the immediate officer by distributing a letter of the consent form to the respondents, which was signed by

them and returned to the researcher.

Afterwards, the purpose of the study and instructions on how the items on the survey should be answered are explained to the respondents. Then, the survey was administered, and they were given enough time to answer the survey. After completing the survey, the researcher collected the responses from the respondents. The data were gathered, tallied, and processed with (SPSS) Statistical Package for Social Science. The processed data was interpreted and analyzed, and the results were used to craft the preventive measures that can lessen and prevent the crimes to happen. Finally, summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be formulated. Then, the researcher prepared for the final oral defense. After the oral defense, the manuscript was revised based on the comments and suggestions of the Oral Examination Committee. After the final editing and revision, hardbound copies of the manuscript were submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies Program and other offices.

The following statistical tools for the interpretation of results according to sub-problems were used. 1) Percentage. This was used as descriptive statistics that describe a part of a whole. 2) Weighted Mean. This was used to get the average frequency of the responses in each weighted item. 3) Analysis of Variance (F-Test). It was used for unpaired small samples to reject or accept the hypothesis and to present significant differences on the responses of the respondents. (Qusquino, 2022) 4) Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (or Pearson correlation coefficient, for short). is a measure of the strength of a linear association between two variables and is denoted by r .

DISCUSSION

Factors that influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City in terms of mental aspect

The findings reveal that police officers strongly agree that mental health factors significantly influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City, with an overall mean of 3.52. The highest-ranked factor, with a mean of 3.80, is the statement that “Any person who experienced depression” is more likely to commit crimes, interpreted as Strongly Agree. Tied in second rank, both with a mean of 3.60, are “Persons who have been delinquent” and “Persons who experienced violence,” also interpreted as Strongly Agree. “Persons who have mental incapacity” ranks fourth with a mean of 3.40, interpreted as Agree, while “Persons who have mental illness” ranks last with a mean of 3.20, also interpreted as Agree.

These results indicate that depression plays a significant role in influencing criminal behavior. Depression is associated with an increased risk of adverse outcomes, which can lead to uncontrollable setbacks and result in the commission of crimes. Individuals suffering from depression often exhibit anger, irritability, and frustration, sometimes over minor issues, leading to impulsive actions and criminal behaviors. Fazel et al. (2015) support this finding, noting that depressive symptoms are linked to a higher risk of violent crime.

Delinquency is another critical factor, encompassing maladaptive and often illegal behaviors such as alcohol abuse, drug use, and school misconduct. These behaviors frequently escalate into criminal activities. Additionally, individuals who have experienced or been exposed to violence are more likely to replicate such behaviors, as exposure to violence can normalize such actions and create a cycle of aggression and crime.

Baranyi et al. (2021) highlight that socio-ecological factors, including exposure to crime, are contextual predictors of depression. Crime impacts mental health directly through

victimization or indirectly through the environment, fostering a climate of fear and anxiety. Generaal et al. (2019) further emphasize that the physical and social environment, along with perceived safety, contributes to mental health issues, which, in turn, may influence criminal tendencies.

These findings underscore the interconnectedness of mental health, exposure to violence, and delinquent behaviors in influencing crime. Addressing these factors through mental health interventions, community support, and preventive measures can help mitigate crime and improve societal well-being.

Factors that influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City in terms of social aspect

The factors that influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City in terms of social aspect has an overall mean of 3.44 and verbally interpreted as Agree. First in rank is Poverty with a mean of 3.80 and verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Next is Family Background with a mean of 3.60 and verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Both in third rank are Peer Influence and Unavailability of decent jobs offered with a mean of 3.40 and verbally interpreted as Agree while last in rank is Environmental factors with a mean of 3.00 and verbally interpreted as Agree.

It can be deduced on the result that they agree that the main factor that influences in the commission of crimes is due to poverty since it is the main factor, a domino effect can happen and be created, people who experienced hunger and they see the hunger that struck to their family especially if there are children in the family, people can create things and do something which in return might result to unlawful activities. People are trying their best to sustain the families' need and even their own needs even if this means that they have to do unlawful deeds which reflects the Filipino saying "Kapit sa patalim". Filipinos will do everything for their family and to survive.

Pepa (2018) emphasized that a society like the Philippines, where poverty is given which causes criminality. Crimes are committed in areas where the urban poor live, and their occurrence is quite regular. Usui (2021) cited that the chronic problems of high unemployment, slow poverty reduction, and low investment are reflections of slow industrialization. Taylor (2016) emphasizes on poverty's hard consequences playing an important role in turning someone to illicit acts, because they gradually lower their estimated perception of the risk of being caught, as they feel that there is not much to lose and also trap them in a life with very few chances of escaping from poverty. Ludwig, Duncan, and Hirschfield (2020) show that high-poverty areas have on average more violent crime and teens are more likely to desert school and get involved in teen gangs when they live in high-poverty areas.

Factors that influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City in terms of economic aspect

Police officers strongly agree that economic factors significantly influence the commission of crimes in Lipa City, with an overall mean of 3.52. Ranking highest are "Price increase in basic needs" and "Insufficient salary," both with a mean of 3.80 and verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Following these are "Too many members of the family" and "Educational needs of the children tempt them to commit crimes," both with a mean of 3.40 and interpreted as Agree. Ranking last is "Vices ('bisyo')," with a mean of 3.20 and also interpreted as Agree.

The results highlight the critical role of economic challenges, particularly rising costs of basic needs and inadequate salaries, in driving individuals toward criminal behavior. Economic hardship, such as the inability to afford essential items or provide for one's family, creates significant psychological stress and frustration. This may lead individuals to view

criminal activities as a viable option to improve their dire circumstances, as the risk of legal consequences appears less threatening compared to the hardships they endure. When economic deprivation limits opportunities for a decent quality of life, it fosters a mindset where engaging in illicit activities is perceived as the only alternative to survival.

This aligns with Bothos and Thomopoulos, who assert that economic factors such as rising living costs and inadequate income contribute to violent behaviors and higher crime rates. They also identify related issues, including street gangs, drug markets, and inadequate social investments, as exacerbating factors. Melick (2023) further emphasizes that insufficient salaries can push individuals toward criminal activity. However, social security subsidies can mitigate these risks by alleviating economic pressures. Melick also highlights that a person's decision to engage in crime is influenced not only by their motivation but also by the perceived opportunities and potential rewards relative to the risks of being caught and punished.

Addressing economic disparities, such as ensuring living wages and stabilizing the prices of basic goods, is crucial for reducing crime rates. Strengthening social safety nets and creating opportunities for financial stability can help alleviate the economic pressures that drive individuals toward criminal behaviors.

Significant differences in the assessment of respondents on the factors influencing the commission of crimes

Age as a factor

The analysis shows no significant differences in the assessment of crime factors based on age. Respondents across age groups (21-30, 31-40, and 41 years and above) share consistent perceptions regarding the mental, social, and economic aspects influencing crime. This consistency suggests that age does not play a determining role in shaping views on the causes of crime. Crowl (2017) supports this finding, asserting that life experiences and exposure to criminal scenarios in adulthood commonly shape perspectives, leading to shared understanding across age groups.

Sex as a factor

There are no significant differences in perceptions between male and female respondents regarding the factors influencing crime. Both sexes exhibit similar views across all examined aspects, indicating that shared professional experiences in law enforcement outweigh gender differences in shaping perceptions. Freeman (2018) emphasizes that building relationships within communities and diagnosing root causes of crime require collective understanding, which appears to hold regardless of sex among police officers.

Rank as a factor

The respondents' rank within the police hierarchy also does not significantly affect their assessment of crime factors. Officers of different ranks, from Police Major to Patrolman/Patrolwoman, display uniform perceptions of the causes of crime. This uniformity aligns with Heider's attribution theory (Ehrlich et al., 2021), which suggests that individuals attribute causes to observed behaviors in similar ways when exposed to common environments. The professional responsibilities shared across ranks reinforce a consistent understanding of crime influences.

Years of service as a factor

The length of service in law enforcement does not significantly influence perceptions of crime factors. Officers with varying years of service (1-5, 6-10, and 11 years or more) consistently identify similar causes of crime. This finding underscores the role of shared occupational exposure in shaping views, as suggested by Murphy (2017), who highlights that professional experiences rather than personal factors primarily determine perceptions of crime.

Years of residence as a factor

Similarly, the duration of residence in Lipa City does not result in significant differences in perceptions of crime influences. Police officers, regardless of their length of residence, exhibit uniform views on the factors affecting criminal behavior. Freeman (2018) notes that proximity to and engagement with the community are crucial for understanding crime patterns, and these experiences transcend the length of residence.

The uniformity in perceptions across age, sex, rank, years of service, and years of residence reflects the strong influence of shared professional experiences and daily exposure to crime-related scenarios. This supports Austria and Diaz's (2019) argument that effective crime prevention requires targeting high-risk populations and areas based on a shared understanding of crime factors. Furthermore, Freeman (2018) highlights the importance of community-police relationships in diagnosing and addressing crime causes, emphasizing the value of collective perspectives in law enforcement.

Hence, the findings suggest that demographic factors such as age, sex, rank, service duration, and residence do not significantly alter police officers' understanding of crime influences. This uniformity highlights the potential for collaborative efforts within the police force to craft effective and informed crime prevention strategies.

CONCLUSION

Crime remains a pervasive issue worldwide, significantly impacting societies, economies, and individuals. Its persistent rise, despite global and local prevention efforts, underscores the complexity of its causes and the challenges in addressing it effectively. This study revealed that the factors influencing the commission of crimes in Lipa City span mental, social, and economic aspects. Mental health issues, such as depression and exposure to violence, play a critical role in prompting criminal behavior. Social factors, particularly poverty, family background, and peer influence, further exacerbate criminal tendencies. Economic challenges, including rising living costs and insufficient salaries, were also identified as significant contributors, driving individuals to engage in illicit activities as a means of survival.

Moreover, the study found no significant differences in the perceptions of police officers regarding crime influences when analyzed by age, sex, rank, years of service, or residence. This uniformity highlights the shared understanding and experiences among law enforcement officers, emphasizing the influence of professional exposure over demographic factors in shaping views on crime.

The findings align with existing literature, which underscores the multifaceted nature of crime. As Burraston et al. (2018) and Vickery (2018) explain, relative deprivation and economic inequality often lead to frustration and impulsivity, increasing the likelihood of

criminal behavior. Similarly, social conditions such as poverty and peer pressure, as emphasized by Pepa (2018) and Usui (2021), create environments where crime becomes a perceived necessity.

To combat crime effectively, a holistic approach is required—one that addresses economic disparities, strengthens community-police relationships, and provides mental health support and education. As Austria and Diaz (2019) suggest, targeting high-risk areas and implementing preventive measures tailored to local needs can significantly reduce crime and its impact on society.

As such, understanding the interplay of mental, social, and economic factors is crucial in crafting informed and effective crime prevention strategies. By fostering collaboration among law enforcement, communities, and policymakers, it is possible to create a safer and more equitable society.

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