

Describing and applying victimization theory



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and Application of Theory of Victimization Historically, criminology and the criminal justice system have always focused on the criminal offending at the expense of criminal victimization. Paradigm shift, advancement in the fields of science, social and economic changes in the witnessed in late 1960s provided a platform for the emergence of the theories of victimization. The period saw the development of new information on crime while addressing the flaws in data compiled by police reports. A number of victimization perspectives such as Lifestyle-Exposure Theory and Routine activity theory (Robert and Terance, 1993).

Cohen and Felson proposed Routine Activity Theory of Victimization and mainly focused on predatory crime. Crime is described in this theory as an act of taking or damaging property belonging to another person. Crime, as perceived in this theory, posits three characteristics; a motivated offender, target, and absence of guardianship. For any crime to occur, the motivated offender must make contact with the victim or the target. Other intervening variables include the absence of persons or conditions that could intervene between the two (Wilcox, 2010).

In this theory, the first variable-the motivated offender- is given. According to proponents of this theory, proper understanding of crime must focus on other elements other than the motivation of the offender. Cohen and Felson use the example of increasing levels of disposable income in the early 1960 due to increased number of couples working. The need for leisure creates the need for families to buy electronics and other household appliances. These developments increased chances for burglary as most people never stayed at home to guard these appliances Wilcox, 2010).

Theories of victimization have been applied in a number situations such as <https://assignbuster.com/describing-and-applying-victimization-theory/>

sex crime, stalking, and property crime among others. The underlying principle in the examples listed is that the offender and the victim must be within the same physical area to produce an elevated risk of victimization. In the wake of the current technological development especially in the use of the internet, the elements of crime in the Lifestyle-routine theory such as guardianship, proximity to potential offenders and exposure creates endless opportunities for cyberspace victimization. The approach adopted by this theory is that physical interaction increases opportunities for victimization in space and time. The cyberspace victimization, however, do not require the offender and the victim to interact physically in space and time.

The application of the Routine-Lifestyle activities theory in the cybercrime may not conform to the offender and the victim being at the same place and time but rather interact through a system. Victimization over the internet takes many forms such as sexual harassment and fraud. All these acts may begin through emails, and the two parties need not to be at the same place for this victimization to take place. The crime also involves time intersection between the offender and the victim.

In most cases, the cyber crime may not take place in the traditional time and space concept as provided for in the theory. Nevertheless, victimization still occurs. For instance, a stalker's email may be sent only to be read three days later. At the time when such email is read, the crime (stalking) is committed (Henson et al., 2011).

In conclusion, the perspectives on Victimization theory are numerous and find a wide range of application in criminology and criminal justice.

References

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