

Research Article:
National Crime Victimization Survey Report
(Under the *Crime Victimization Survey Project - 2012*)

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Justice and the Office of Justice Affairs are keenly aware of the importance of crime victimization data. *The Crime Victimization Survey* is a project to survey crime data directly from victims of crime throughout the country. The project commenced with a pilot survey in 2005 of data on crime victimization in Bangkok and Nakhon Si Thammarat province. This survey covered characteristics of victims of crime, characteristics of offenders, the circumstances of cases, the time and place of offences, damages and impacts from crimes, reports made to the police and responses by police to offences. The results of this survey provided a more realistic picture of the actual situation and trends in crime when combined with existing data from criminal cases and were useful to relevant agencies in setting guidelines for preventing and solving the problem of crime. In 2008, the Office of Justice Affairs expanded this survey on crime victimization to cover the whole country and has continued to carry out the survey on a nation-wide basis since that time. In 2012, the National Crime Victimization Survey cooperated with the National Statistical Office in organizing a crime victimization survey in every province throughout the country as part of the *Crime Victimization Survey 2012*. In this survey, the Office of Justice Affairs worked in cooperation with Suan Dusit Rajabhat University to analyze the data obtained and to prepare a report on key findings relating to four types of crime: crimes related to property, crimes threatening life or physical safety, sex crimes, and unauthorized use of personal data or documents (also known as identity theft). The results of the survey were then distributed to agencies within the system of justice, educational institutions and to the public to serve as basic information on the occurrence of crime and as a basis for setting policies that will assist agencies within the system of justice to prepare for and solve the problem of crime. The results will also be of benefit in future academic research on the subject of crime in Thailand.

2. Objectives

2.1. To analyze data from the crime victimization survey to identify key findings related to the characteristics of victims, characteristics of offenders, circumstances of cases, the most frequent time and place of crimes, damages and impacts from incidents of crime, the frequency of reports made to police and police response to the crimes reported.

2.2 To present and publish the results the crime victimization survey in order to support the setting of policies and preparation of agencies within the system of justice to solve the problem of crime and to serve as a data resource for future academic research.

2.3. To identify obstacles and issues to be considered in setting guidelines and preparing future nation-wide crime victimization surveys.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Steps and procedures

In conducting the national crime victimization survey for 2012, the following steps were followed:

3.1.1 Phase 1:

Set action plan and guidelines for the project,
Conduct a review of relevant literature,
Construct a conceptual framework for the basic study, and
Compile an inception report.

3.1.2 Phase 2:

Analyze the results of the national crime victimization survey for 2012 obtained from the National Statistical Office and identify key findings by comparing them to existing crime victimization data as well as to other relevant crime data.

Organize a seminar among relevant groups and experts in crime analysis in order to summarize the key issues identified in the survey, discuss problem issues and possible improvements or additions to the survey questionnaire.

Compile a first draft of the study report.

3.1.2 Phase 3

Organize a conference/seminar to present the Crime Victimization Survey Report and obtain suggestions from participants,

Compile the final National Crime Victimization Survey Report,

Compile a Summary Report,

Prepare an academic article on the crime situation,

Disseminate survey data,

Create a website in Thai and foreign languages to make data on crime victimization available to the general public.

3.2 Method of data analysis

This research study employs descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages, to explain the results of the study. Analysis includes:

3.2.1 An analysis of data related to offences divided into eight categories: personal data of victims, types of crime, nature of offenses, time and place of incidents, circumstances of cases, response to offences and damages resulting from crimes, reporting of crimes, and actions taken in response to crimes.

3.2.2 A comparative analysis of areas (such as comparing a region of the country to Bangkok) and comparing inside municipal districts to outside municipal districts.

3.2.3 A comparative analysis of overall data or of significant issues in the survey in 2008 and 2012.

4. Analysis results, summary and comparison of data on crime victimization between 2008 and 2012

4.1 Personal data of victims

An analysis of the data relating to victims of crime revealed that most victims were male, between 45-59 years of age, employed in sales with mid-level income, were married and owned their own house.

In comparing the personal data of victims in 2008 and 2012, it was found that the age of victims was in the same range; i.e. 45-59 years old, both inside and outside local municipal administration districts. In 2012, within municipal districts, most victims of crimes relating to property, sex crimes, and unauthorized use of personal data or documents were employed in sales or self-owned businesses. This finding is the same as that for 2008. Outside municipal districts, most victims were employed in agriculture. There was no difference between 2008 and 2012 in terms of the marital status of victims – most were married. In summary, victims of crime did not differ between 2008 and 2012 in terms of age, occupation, or marital status.

In comparing Bangkok and regions 1-9, in both 2008 and 2012, victims of crime were in the same age group, i.e. 45-59 years of age. Most were married and were employed in sales or operated their own business. However, one interesting result is that the percentage of those employed in agriculture who became victims of crime rose from 26.9 percent in 2008 to 31.2 percent in 2012, especially in Region 1 which rose from 6.7 percent in 2008 to 10.1 percent in 2012. During the same period, in Region 3 (the Upper Northeast Region) and Region 4 (the Lower Northeast Region) which had the highest rates, there was an increase from 46 percent to 49.4 percent in Region 3 and from 46.1 percent to 49.6 percent in Region 4. With the expansion of urban areas in the Northeast, the rate of crime victimization of farmers increased. The rate of victimization of farmers in region 9 (the Lower Southern Region) also increased from 36.7 percent in 2008 to 43.6 percent in 2012. It was found that farmers in Region 9 were at greater risk because of urban expansion and increased social turmoil.

4.2 Residences of victims

An analysis of the types of residences of victims of crimes found that most victims lived in houses that were not surrounded by a fence and in which the victims had been living for more than five years. Because these residences had no fence, or no strong or high fence, it was easy to enter and exit the property. Not having a fence is one of the risk factors that can easily lead to becoming a victim of crime. In both 2008 and 2012, most victims of crime lived in residential areas in single houses that could be easily entered and exited because there was no fence. This was the case both inside municipal areas and outside municipal areas.

4.3 Types of crime

The survey results show that the order of frequency of types of crimes committed in 2008 and 2012 was the same. Crimes related to goods and property was the most frequent. This type of crime was followed by crimes threatening life or physical safety, crimes involving falsification / unauthorized use of personal data or documents and sex crimes. The order was the same inside and outside municipal districts. However, crimes that related to goods and property fell from 94 percent of the total number of crimes in 2008 to 92 percent

in 2012. Crimes threatening life or physical safety increased from 4.6 percent in 2008 to 5.2 percent in 2012 and crimes involving falsification / unauthorized use of personal data or documents increased from 1.3 percent in 2008 to 2.0 percent in 2012. The percentage of sex crimes was the same in both years - 0.3 percent.

4.4 Reoccurring crimes

The survey results show that victims of crime believe they will be victims of crime again. If some activities or actions of individuals occur frequently or regularly there is a risk of becoming a victim of crime, these include leaving the home unattended while away at work during the day, wearing expensive jewelry and going out of the house at night. These actions increase the risk of being robbed or having a house burgled. Therefore, to prevent being a repeat victim of crime people must employ measures to protect themselves such as by organizing security patrols to watch over their house and their neighbourhood, building a fence around the perimeter of their property; installing bright lights around their house, in walkways, and in dark, isolated areas; installing closed-circuit television cameras; installing burglar alarms; monitoring the entry-exit points to the community, village or housing estate; setting regulations for parking areas to make robbery less easy; and setting punishments according to law which are swift, strong and certain.

When comparing Bangkok to Regions 1-9, in the 2008 survey it was found that, overall, 81.0 percent of crime victims experienced a single instance of crime. In 2012, this percentage increased to 84.6 percent. An increase in single-instance crime was found in all regions except Region 3 (Lower Northeast Region) which reported a very small drop from 83 percent in 2007 to 82.5 percent in 2012. The highest rate of crime occurred in Region 1 (Central Region including Bangkok). It is noticeable that the crime rate increased in Region 5 (Upper Northern Region) from 75.1 percent in 2007 to 81.9 percent in 2012.

4.5 Characteristics of offenders

The survey results show that in cases where offenders acted alone, most were male, between 26 - 35 years old, were not members of a criminal gang and were not under the influence of drugs. In cases where crimes were committed by more than one person it was found that most offenders were also male but were mostly in the 18-25 year age group; younger than those who acted alone. It was undetermined whether the offenders who acted in pairs or groups were members of criminal gangs, whether they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol or whether they knew the victim of the crime.

In comparing the personal data of offenders who acted alone, overall throughout the country in 2007 it was found that they were mostly male, aged 18-25 years. Victims were not sure whether they were members of criminal or delinquent gangs. In 2012, it was found that offenders were mostly male, were between 26-35 years old and were not members of criminal or delinquent gangs, were not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of committing the offence, were not known to the victim before the incident, and could be remembered by the victim.

In the survey of 2007, a comparison between Bangkok and Regions 1-9 found that offenders who acted alone in Region 5 (Upper Northern Region) constituted the highest proportion of offenders at 59.8 percent followed by Region 2 (Eastern Region) at 57.9 percent and Region 1 (Central Region) at 56.6 percent. In 2012, it was found that offenders who acted alone in Region 5 still constituted the largest proportion but that the percentage had increased significantly to 77.3 percent. This was followed by Region 8 at 58.8 percent

and Region 3 at 56.6 percent. Therefore, Region 5 had the highest percentage of offenders who acted alone in both surveys and this percentage increased from 59.8 percent in 2007 to 77.3 percent in 2012.

4.6 Time and place of incidents

An analysis of survey data on the time and place of incidents found that most incidents of crime occurred at night. Most victims reported that they were not sure of the time of the incident or they were asleep at the time. It was during the period between 12:01 a.m. – 3 a.m. when the victims didn't have a chance to protect themselves. The crime survey in 2008 found that most crimes occurred between 6:01 p.m. and 6 a.m. In 2012, most crimes also occurred at night. When categorized according to type of crime that occurred it was found that crimes related to goods and property and crimes threatening life or physical safety occurred at night. Crimes involving unauthorized use of personal data or documents and sex crimes occurred during the day. The critical time for crime occurrence in 2008 was generally at night and specifically between 12:01 a.m. and 3 a.m. In 2012, the critical time for crime was the same. Differences occurred in regard to sex crimes. In 2007, these crimes occurred mostly at night but in 2012 they occurred mostly during the day.

When comparing Bangkok to Regions 1 – 9, the 2008 survey revealed that throughout the country the highest proportion of crimes (36.5 percent) occurred between 6:01 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. In the 2012 survey, most crimes occurred during the same period, 6:01 p.m. – 6 a.m. In 2008, the highest frequency of crime (46.5 percent) occurred in Bangkok but in 2012 the highest frequency of crime (61.8 percent) was in Region 2, the Northeast Region. Crimes usually occurred in the victim's house.

4.7 Circumstances of cases

Most crimes relating to property were robbery. Property stolen was usually goods that could be easily carried away such as briefcases, handbags, purses and wallets, mobile phones and portable electronic goods. An analysis of survey results relating to crimes threatening life or physical safety found that most instances were of inflicting bodily harm by pulling, dragging, slapping, hitting or punching. Weapons used were mostly knives, machetes and sharp objects.

Most sex related crimes were obscene behavior / sexual coercion. Weapons used were mostly knives, machetes, and sharp objects. Many sex crimes are "dark figure" or "hidden" crimes.

Survey results relating to the unauthorized use of personal data or documents was carried out by using personal data or documents to obtain credit cards or conduct business transactions such as making a loan or paying a debt. They were also used to produce counterfeit documents or to carry out other types of crime. In these cases, the owner was not aware of the use of these documents until after receiving a notice from their bank.

Survey results on crimes related to property in 2008 found that this type of crime was mostly (82.1 percent) robbery or attempted robbery. In the 2012 survey, robbery was still the most frequent crime related to property but the frequency increased to 95.1 percent, both inside and outside municipal areas.

In the crime survey of 2008, crimes threatening life or physical safety accounted for 73.3 percent. In 2012, this figure rose to 79.8 percent. These crimes usually involved pulling, dragging, slapping, hitting or punching. In 2008, 73.8 percent of cases resulted in injury and

in 2012, 68.6 percent. In the 2008 survey, it was found that weapons were used in 48.2 percent of incidents. In the 2012 survey, weapons were used in 48.5 percent of incidents.

In comparing the surveys of 2008 and 2012 in regard to sex crimes it was found that most instances were attempts at obscene behavior and attempts to sexually coerce but weapons were not used. In 2007, rape accounted for 27.7 percent of sex crimes. In 2012, this figure reduced to 19.0 percent. When comparing inside and outside municipal districts it was found that inside municipal districts in 2007 and 2012, most instances were of obscene behavior and sexual coercion. Outside municipal districts in 2008, it was found that the most frequent occurrence was of rape which is different from outside municipal districts in 2012 in which most instances were of making verbal threats to rape.

In the crime surveys of both 2008 and 2012, unauthorized use of personal data or documents was found mostly to involve use of personal data or documents without permission in order to obtain credit cards or conduct business transactions such as making a loan or paying a debt. These documents were also used to produce counterfeit documents / cards or to carry out other types of crime. However, usage of documents in this way increased from 49.4 percent in 2008 to 54.3 percent in 2012. In 2008, financial loss was usually in the range of 101 – 10,000 baht but in 2012 the financial loss increased to between 10,000 – 50,000 baht. This increase occurred both inside and outside municipal districts.

4.8 Responses to offenders

In most instances victims had no opportunity to take action against offenders because the victims were not at the scene of the incident at the time that it occurred. The victims were unaware that the incident was occurring. This was the same both inside and outside municipal districts.

Regarding loss and damage resulting from crimes reported in the survey of 2008 it was found that most victims (86.3 percent) were not injured. This corresponds to overall data for both inside and outside municipal districts in the 2012 survey which found that throughout the country most victims were not injured (87.3 percent) as reported by out-patient services at hospitals. In the 2007 survey, 49.7 percent of victims reported that they lost income or earnings because of absence from work to participate in legal proceedings connected with incidents of crime.

In comparing Bangkok with regions 1-9 it was found that financial losses for all categories of victims occurred due to absence from work or loss of work time because of injuries. In 2008, the average loss of time for all regions combined was 23.25 days but in 2012 this increased to 35.74 days. In making comparisons between each region it was found that the region with the greatest rate increase was Region 8 (Upper Southern Region), from an average of 28.84 days to 231.92 days. Specifically for crimes threatening life or physical safety, the average increased from 32.78 days in 2008 to 239.92 days in 2012.

4.9 Reporting and non-reporting of crimes to the police

On the issue of reporting crimes to the police, the major reason given for making a report was to have the police perform their duties better and to arrest and punish the offenders. However, in most cases the police were unaware that the crime had occurred because the victims did not report crime to the police. The major reason given by victims throughout the country for not reporting a crime was that victims did not think the police could do anything about the incident.

The overall data from throughout the country collected in the Crime Victimization Survey in 2008 shows that most victims (65.2 percent) reported that the police were unaware of the occurrence of the crime. In the 2012 survey, there was a small increase to 66.6 percent. In 2007, 62.0 percent of victims reported that they did not think the police could do anything about the crime. This percentage increased to 64.8 percent in 2012. The reason given by victims for not reporting incidents was also that they did not think the police could do anything about the crime. In 2007, 77.5 percent of victims informed the police so that they could arrest the offenders. In 2012, this percentage dropped to 73.7 percent.

In 2008, 38.0 percent of victims reported that police arrived at the crime scene within 30 minutes of being notified. This figure dropped to 28.7 percent in 2012.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Policy-based recommendations

5.1.1 Future crime victimization surveys should collect and analyze data according to specific areas as the problems and crime victimization in different areas or in different regions have different characteristics. In England, collection of data is divided into three areas: Scotland, England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. In the United States, the collection and analysis of data is made according to states which each have different environments and social characteristics.

5.1.2 Thailand should become a participating member of the International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS), conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and collect data more in accordance with international standards. Thailand should also establish links with other ASEAN Community members in relation to crime victimization data.

5.1.3 More importance should be given to dispute mediation and reconciliation in the justice system in order to reduce the number of victims of crimes that initiate judicial procedures. This can be achieved by increasing the role of local area agencies such as sub-district headmen, village leaders and District Administration Organizations to assist victims of crimes and mediate solutions to the problems encountered by victims, especially in crimes threatening life or physical safety, sex crimes, and domestic violence.

5.1.4 The collection of data should be expanded to include victimless crime, such as drug addiction. Data should also be collected on crimes against businesses and commercial crime as well as non-premeditated murder and manslaughter.

5.1.5 The next collection and analysis of data should focus on specific groups so as to be able to protect and assist victims of crime; especially women, children under the age of 12 years, teenagers, foreign refugees and specific nationalities.

5.1.6 Data collection staff should be trained in interviewing and data collection techniques before entering the field to collect data, especially data related to sex crimes, so that they will be able to collect in-depth data efficiently.

5.1.7 A meeting should be organized among users of the survey within the justice system to discuss ways in which the questionnaire can be adjusted so that it collects the specific information needed.

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