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An Investigation into the Effectiveness of City Police Crime Prevention Strategies in Reducing Robbery in Windhoek from 2017-2021

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Windhoek City Police crime prevention strategies in reducing the crimes of robbery in Windhoek. Globally, it is acknowledged that the crime of robbery is persisting at the highest rate and is considered a crime that predominantly affects society given its wide range of occurrences in several locations and times. In Namibia, armed robberies in various forms have been reported and this has become a great concern. These include cash-in-transit vehicle robberies, car hijackings, bank robberies, robberies on farms and robberies at shopping centers.

Statistics released by the Namibian Police Force in the 2021 show that robbery accounts for 25% of total crimes reported annually countrywide, while Windhoek in the Khomas region accounts for 19% of the 25%. The study adopted a qualitative approach for two reasons. Firstly, it allowed the researchers to obtain data from people with the necessary experience. Secondly, qualitative research presents the opportunities to clear ambiguities in answering research questions. The approach was aligned with a case study meanwhile the data was collected through interviews

with the senior and junior members of the Windhoek City Police who were purposefully sampled. The data was further analyzed thematically to give an account of the perception of robberies.

The research study made the following interesting findings. On the factors contributing to robberies in Windhoek, the results indicate that there is a strained police-community relationship. Opportunities are presented by the citizens to the criminals, a lack of involvement in conventional activities, unemployment, lack of stringent measures, peer pressure and family factors are major contributing factors to robberies. On the role of the Windhoek City Police in curbing the scourge of robberies, the City Police alone are ineffective because factors that cause robberies cannot be adequately addressed by the police alone. The above findings are exacerbated by the strategies employed by the City Police to curb crime that seem not to be effective. In terms of long-term solutions, the study recommends the setting up of a focal committee, accelerated use of surveillance cameras (CCTV) in crime hotspots and busy places, and use of stringent measures and benchmarking best practices from other countries.

Keywords: Robberies, Ineffectiveness, Effectiveness, Strategies, City Police, Crime Prevention

Introduction

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Windhoek City Police crime prevention strategies in reducing robberies in Windhoek. Globally, it is acknowledged that the crime of robbery is persisting at the highest rate (Nivette *et al.*, 2021; Munajib, 2021) ^[20, 19] and is considered a crime that predominantly affects society given its wide range of occurrences in several locations and times (Kempen 2014:40) ^[11].

In Namibia, armed robberies in various forms have been reported and this has become a great concern (Mabuku, 2021). These include cash-in-transit vehicle robberies, car hijackings, bank robberies, robberies on farms and robberies at shopping malls. The Windhoek City Police is one of the three municipal police agencies in the entire country and is found in Windhoek only. Their duties include regulating of traffic, enforcement of municipal regulations and crime prevention within the City of Windhoek's jurisdiction (The Republic of Namibia, 2004) ^[24].

To execute its mandate, the City of Windhoek City Police installed Closed-Circuit Television [CCTV] cameras around the city, increased its surveillance through patrols and engaged public members through education on the effects of crime. Despite these strategies, the crime of robberies still occupies its predominant ugly head in Windhoek. Hence the reason to conduct this study to investigate the effectiveness of current strategies aimed at addressing crime in Windhoek by the Windhoek City Police.

Definition of Key Terms

Crime

Crime can be defined as an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law (Lynch, Stretesky & Long, 2015: 45) ^[15]. For this study, the definition above will be used to refer to crime.

Robbery

Robbery is a kind of extortion or theft involving taking anything from another person or in their presence despite their desire to the contrary, involving savagery or dreading them (Snyman, 2014) ^[25]. In addition, robbery occurs when somebody takes something without consent and causes or endeavours to cause death, hurt or wrongful restraint (Snyman, 2014) ^[25]. Therefore, the preceding definition will be used to refer to robbery in the proposed study.

Background of the Problem

The crime of robbery involves taking something of value (theft) by threatening or the use of force or violence and this has been reported to be on the increase in Namibia, for which the Khomas region, where Windhoek is situated, takes the leading role. Theft refers to unlawful and intentional action or crime of stealing (Nangolo, 2020). This has led to public members questioning the effectiveness of the police in reducing robberies, given that Windhoek is one of the few places in the country where there are two major law enforcement agencies, namely, the national police force and the municipal police (Nangolo, 2020). Given that the crime of robbery affects the economy of a country, personal wealth and peaceful societal interaction, this study is motivated by the need to offer contemporary measures that may be used to reduce the occurrence of robberies in the study area and the country at large.

Problem Statement

Statistics released by the Namibian Police Force in the 2021 show that robberies account for 25% of total crimes reported annually countrywide, while Windhoek in the Khomas region accounts for 19% of the 25% (NamPol, 2021). This manifests in various forms such as cash-in-transit vehicle robberies, car hijackings, bank robberies, robberies on farms and robberies at shopping centres (Mabuku, 2021). The constant occurrence of these crimes continues irrespective of the fact that there are two crime prevention agencies in Windhoek, namely, the Namibian Police Force and the Windhoek City Police with crime prevention strategies.

Research Questions

- What are the contributory factors to robberies in Windhoek?
- How effective is the Windhoek City Police in preventing robberies?
- To what extent do preventative strategies mitigate robberies?
- What are the long-term solutions to robberies?

Research Objectives

Primary Objective

To investigate the effectiveness of the Windhoek City Police crime prevention strategies in reducing robberies in Windhoek.

Secondary Objectives

- To determine factors contributing to robberies in

Windhoek.

- To investigate the effectiveness of strategies employed by the Windhoek City Police in preventing robberies.
- To ascertain the extent to which preventative strategies mitigate robberies.
- To recommend long-term solutions to robberies in Windhoek.

Research Methodology

Research methodology entails the process undertaken by a researcher to realize the study's aims and objectives (Kothari & Garg, 2016) ^[13]. This section explains the study's design, approach, the unit of analysis, population, and sampling. Further, the data collection and the analysis are as well justified in the present study. With the above background, the research methodology is more on the practical "how" of a research study, the way the researcher systematically adopts the methods that validate the study results through the research aims, objectives and research questions.

Research Design

The study adopted a case study research design given that it ascertained how effective is the Windhoek City Police in preventing robberies in Windhoek. The case study confirms the importance of selecting specific cases to have a broader insight into one domain, and this may include the primary variable being investigated or the population from which the sample is drawn (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Research Approach

The most common approaches in research are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Bryman & Bell, 2015) ^[4]. In the present study, the qualitative research approach was employed, because the researcher gathered data from experienced individuals at the Windhoek City Police (Saunders *et al.* 2016). Unlike qualitative researchers, for quantitative researchers, their interest lies mainly in statistics and numbers, which are presented using graphs, charts, or tables (Fouché *et al.*, 2021:147) ^[6]. Qualitative researchers solicit the opinions of well-experienced participants with responses presented in written themes. Combining both approaches entails using a mixed method. Because the qualitative study was adopted, the researcher engaged with the participants face to face and all unclear questions and answers were elaborated by the researcher to the participants. Given that the problem under investigation could be understood with the little information available, it was important to use the qualitative approach since it provided the researcher with information on the topic at hand, by a brainstorming session.

The Population

The study population refers to the major components of the study from which the primary sample will be drawn. This may include people within the same setting, with the same characteristics, those working in the same organisation, those with specific job responsibilities or those belonging to one ethnic group (Mohajan, 2018) ^[18]. In this case, the Windhoek City Police officers, both those in leadership positions and subordinates who perform traffic-related duties and crime prevention, were the population of the study. This is because they work in the same organisation and are likely to be affected by the study findings.

Sample and Sample Type

Sampling Frame

Fouché *et al.*, (2021) [6] describe sampling as the process of identifying suitable individuals with predetermined characteristics from which data is collected. Four (4) participants were drawn from the current leadership with the rank of Superintendent to Chief Superintendent and were interviewed compared to initially six that were anticipated from the onset. On the other hand, six (6) operational subordinates with experience in crime and traffic-related matters were interviewed. In addition to the criteria above, all participants worked at the Windhoek City Police for at least three years from the date of the interview. For the respondents from leadership, they provided strategic perspectives on robbery prevention since the strategies used by operational members are formulated and approved by them. Meanwhile, the subordinates provided first-hand experiences on robbery-related issues.

Sampling Technique

The well-known sampling techniques are probability and non-probability samples (Nowell *et al.*, 2017) [21]. According to Nowell *et al.* (2017) [21], probability sampling is mainly for quantitative researchers since it permits the generalization of the findings to similar populations and settings. Meanwhile, non-probability sampling cannot be generalized to other settings. In the present study, the purposive sampling method of non-probability was used. The researcher selected those he deemed fit and met the criteria set to participate in the study. Firstly, the human resource department was approached to determine the number of those with three and more years of service in the organization, this is because three and more years of work experience is appropriate for understanding broadly the facet of any organisation. Secondly, only Windhoek City Police employees participated in the study, especially those that work as crime prevention officers.

Data Collection Method

Data collection is the process of soliciting information from the sampled population for analysis and attaining the study’s objectives (Mohajan, 2018) [18]. The current research used semi-structured interviews to produce an account of what participants revealed thus leading to achieving the study’s objective. The interview permitted the interaction between the researcher and respondents during the interview, in which unclear questions were addressed and elaborative answers were recorded.

Data Analysis

Fouché *et al.* (2021) [6], maintain that data analysis is refining raw data for better comprehension by the researcher. Since the study is qualitative in nature, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data. Themes were identified and grouped based on their similarities and differences before being further interpreted in relation to the research questions (Terry *et al.*, 2017) [26]. With thematic analysis, the researcher is positioned to recognize the dominant themes, making it easier to conclude on findings of the study in relation to the study’s research objectives.

Findings

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Windhoek

City Police crime prevention strategies in reducing robberies in Windhoek. In this section, the participants’ views are presented thematically. Firstly, information regarding the participants’ demographics is provided. Secondly, responses based on the study objectives are also presented. To differentiate the responses of the participants, anonymous codes are assigned to each participant. For example, **L1, L2, L3** and **L4** represented the first, second, third and fourth respondents who were in leadership positions that were interviewed in the study. For the first, second and seventh participants of subordinates, there were represented for instance by **S1, S2** and **S7**. This applied to all other remaining subordinates. In presenting data, common themes that emerged dictated the categories of the responses. For further clarification, responses are indicated either by direct quotes while indented. For instance, where words are not more than 40, an indent is also applied for words that are more than 40 as dictated in the Stadio reference guide.

Demographic Information of Participants

Table 1: Participants’ information

Gender	Frequency	Position	Frequency	Years of service	Frequency
Male	6	Leadership	4	3-6	3
Female	4	Subordinates	6	7+	7

Source: Author’s field data

From the table above, four (40%) females took part in the study while six (60%) males out of 10 participants took part in the study. It can also be seen, from Table 1, that those that participated in the study were those in leadership positions, while six were operational members. It is also observed from the study that all participants that took part in the study, have more than three years of work experience as City Police officials. While 3(30%) were within three and six years of work experience, the majority 7(70%) of the respondents have seven and more years of work experience.

Objectives Research Questions

In this section, major themes in which the responses were grouped are indicated in relation to the number of responses as themed below:

Table 2: Themes and sub-themes from interviews sessions

Theme and Sub-Themes	Frequencies
What are the factors contributing to robberies in windhoek?	10
Police-Community-Strained Relationship	7
Predisposing and precipitating factors	10
Lack of involvement in conventional activities	10
Unemployment	10
Lack of stringent measures	4
How effective is the city police in preventing robbery crimes?	10
Not effective	9
Effective	1
How far do the preventative strategies mitigate robberies?	10
Fail to mitigate robbery	9
Strategies that mitigate robbery	1
What are the long-term solutions to robberies?	10
Appointment of a focal committee	3
Surveillance cameras	10
Stringent measures	8
Benchmarking practices	5

Source: Researcher field data (2023)

What are the Factors Contributing to Robberies in Windhoek?

Theme 1: Police-Community-Strained Relationship

Seven of the participants (L1, L2, L4, S1, S2, S3 and S6) indicated that a strained relationship exists between the police and the community, and it was one of the contributing factors to the robberies.

L1, *"I think the major problem is the sour relation that we find ourselves with the community members who are not willing to assist us in terms of reporting planned robberies or any other crimes in general"*.

Even though the relationship that exists between us (City Police) and the community does not contribute directly to robberies, but indirectly promotes the escalation of robbery crimes, since most of the time, criminals are not caught while there are known by the community members' (L4).

The above is well elaborated by S1:

"Sometimes I ask myself what should be done to get the support and the trust from community members. These little details of... [strained] relations account for our ineffectiveness in combating robberies in the city. These crimes happen almost every day, not only in Windhoek, in the central business district but also in the suburbs where the visibility of the police is commendable. I (sic) must state further that the reason that those that commit these kinds of crimes are not caught, this motivates them to carry on and influence others. [However], to be honest, to address this, requires efforts from the community that reside with criminals."

Theme 2: Predisposing and Precipitating Factors

All participants (L1, L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6) linked the high number of robberies to the opportunities that are presented by the citizens to criminals.

To begin with, there is a need for public awareness, my experience attests to the fact that robberies can only take place if the opportunity for it to be committed is there. This implies that people still lack awareness of the modus operandi of robbers, and they exploit such weaknesses and get away with their dirty deals (L4).

According to S1, *"some business owners opt not to put security measures in place which have been recognised as the leading cause that motivates robbers to execute their intentions"*.

S6 provided an extended explanation of the above theme:

Even though the reality is that no matter the effort that the Windhoek City Police and the Namibian Police Force put in, there will be robberies. [However], this crime can be reduced with everyone taking responsibility. Most of the time, planned robberies will be known by at least a person in the community who is not part of the syndicate, but that person remains silent and mute while aware of a planned robbery. In this case, community members themselves become a precipitating factor in crime.

Theme 3: Lack of involvement in conventional activities

All participants (L1, L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6) associated an increase in the number of robberies to a lack of youth conventional activities.

L1, *"you can imagine that the National Youth Service which was supposed to be responsible for accelerating youth activities has over the past years failed. This promotes the youth to engage themselves in criminal activities as we observed that those that are mostly involved are youths"*.

L4 also highlighted that.

This finding could be understood when looking at the fact that in Windhoek, only few conventional activities exist, that youth could have engaged youth in generating income and distance themselves from criminal activities. This is mainly due to the lack of business opportunities justified by the increased high rate of unemployment in Namibia.

Theme 4: Unemployment

All participants (L1, L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6) indicated that unemployment is cited as a major contributor not only to the crime of robbery but all other crimes.

"Due to unemployment and poverty, people tend to engage themselves in criminal activities since robbery presents an opportunity of owning quick cash, criminals tend to prefer this method to other crimes" S3.

S5 *"there are. [several] youths that live in Windhoek in search of employment. These youths find it challenging to survive without employment in this regard they resort to robbery to be buy food [par] and fight food insecurity in the city"*.

Theme 5: Lack of Stringent Measures

There were four participants, L2, S3, S5 and S6, who related that the increase in the crime of robbery is due to the lack of stringent measures when found guilty.

L2 explained more on the above theme:

What is surprising in our court is that, for instance, those found guilty of stock theft are given stringent measures compared to those found guilty of robbery. We [sic] should start from there! These are serious offences that impact the economy of the country negatively since they always involve items of high economic value.

S5, *"There are no stringent measures from the courts in dealing with these people, and this on its own motivates these people because there are always given fines that they are able to pay to return back in society to continue with their criminal behaviour"*.

Four participants, L3, S2, S4, and S6 related that the causes of robberies are a result of peer pressure and family factors that influence the behaviour of the criminals.

L3 narrated:

In my case, I (sic) have ensured that to a greater extent my son does not associate himself with delinquent peers, because I (sic) have realised that those that keep on committing robbery, their motive is influenced by the support they receive from their friends. I (sic) will cite that poor guardianship and poor parenting from

their upbringing accounts for the increased number of gangsters who terrorise the City of Windhoek by robbing people.

S6 noted:

There are parents who are aware that the food brought to the table by children results from criminal activities and they still accept and harbour them. When not reported they continue the trend and are motivated to carry out robbery activities. Because of poverty, certain families find themselves, meaning whatever means are available to them to have something on the table they accept it even if it means they obtain it by unethical means.

How Effective is the City Police in Preventing Robbery Crimes?

The question was important to ascertain the role of City Police in curbing the scourge of robbery as a crime, taking cognisance of their capabilities. In responding to the question, participants' responses are themed below:

Theme 1: Not Effective

In this regard nine respondents (**L1, L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S3, S5** and **S6**) indicated that the strategies that the City Police employ to curb the menace of robbery are not effective.

"It is remiss of duty to indicate that as police we (sic) have not been doing well since we (sic) have a lot of crime related to robberies in Windhoek. This literally means the strategies we use to address crime have not been successful" (**L3**).

S2, *"the City Police have not really addressed the issue related to robbery crimes. This is evident because of the joint operations that the police and other law enforcement agencies have undertaken"*.

An extended explanation is given by **S6**:

Thus far we (sic) have not effectively addressed the public concerns about the increase in robbery cases in Windhoek. I should say that it is humanly impossible to prevent robberies completely in the city, especially without the involvement of other community members. This is because even those factors that motivate people to commit crime cannot be addressed by the police alone.

Theme 2: Effective

Despite the majority agreeing that the City Police are effective in preventing robberies, one respondent (**S4**) believed the City Police are effective in addressing the crimes of robbery.

In justifying the above theme, **S4** clarified that:

Our (sic) prevention efforts have yielded remarkable results in addressing robberies, [this could be different] ...if there were no City Police. In as much as we (sic) complain that robbery is skyrocketing, it should be noted that these crimes are manageable since there could be more crimes if the City of Windhoek only depended on the Namibian Police Force. But you can see that the national police and City Police are (sic)

running around the locations and suburbs and we are doing well.

This was one of the surprising results that emerged from the study. However, such a variation may be necessitated by interpretation of the term effectiveness. Even though to a large extent the majority believe that the police are not effective, this may be because the comparison is made because had it not been for the City Police, the situation could be worse than the current situation.

How Far do the Preventative Strategies Mitigate Robberies?

This question was aimed at finding out whether the current strategies employed by the City Police in reducing robbery are effective or not. Therefore, the responses were grouped into the following themes:

Theme 1: Failure to Mitigate Robbery

Nine of the participants (**L1, L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S3, S5** and **S6**) alluded that the strategies that are in place now are not effective in terms of mitigating robberies.

L4, *"the ineffectiveness of our strategies in addressing the crime of robbery is not surprising, since there is no area of focus, but random crime prevention methods are used. This means that the criminals are more advanced than we are"*.

To tell you the truth, we (sic) do not have proper strategies specifically targeted to address robbery, the current crime prevention patrols are sometimes done with other stakeholders as the only way we curb general crime. But to me, this is a problem, especially when considering that each crime requires a different method of addressing it.

S3 offered the following sentiment on the above theme:

The essence of not using specific methods may be the reason why there is no focus in terms of strategies and the result shows that we are ineffective in reducing robbery crimes. The strategy includes patrolling the city both during the day and at night. Despite the continued trend of patrolling the suburbs, this has not stopped robberies from recurring which implies that the strategy to mitigate robbery is not effective.

It is a worrisome trend that our efforts thus have not yielded desirable results in addressing the crime of robbery.

Theme 2: Strategy to Mitigate Robbery

S4, still believes that despite the occurrence of robbery crimes, the City Police strategies that are aimed at addressing robbery have been effective, this is explained by the reason that robbers in some cases are caught by the police. Through testimony, they are always found guilty. The respondent alluded further:

It is more important to ensure that, [ascertaining] how effective our (sic) strategies of combating crime should not be measured on the number of crimes happening, but rather on what could happen if there were no City Police. [In addition], in Windhoek we have few cases of robberies than in most cities in Africa.

What are the Long-Term Solutions to Robbery?

For this question the researcher intended to establish the long-term solutions to robbery crimes. This was important because it would lead to recommendations and measures that may be adopted to address the menace associated with robberies.

Theme 1: Appointment of a Focal Committee

Three participants (S1, S2 and S4) indicated that in terms of long-term solutions to robberies, there is a need to establish and appoint a robbery focal point committee.

I suggest they should be robberies... [focal committees], which should consist of another security cluster such as the National Police, Public Prosecutor, Intelligence Service, Namibian Defence Force and Correctional Services appointed and responsible for dealing with robberies. Furthermore, this committee will work with dedicated teams in all regions to investigate robberies, conduct analysis, process investigations and interview witnesses.

Since robbery is a crime of concern, it is important to have a committee that will be responsible to identify the challenges that are associated with robbery, analysing the crime situation, and providing possible recommendations that may be used to reduce the menace of the crime of robbery. This will result in people entrusted not only to the police but introducing targeted police surveillance and searches at places where many robberies occur.

Theme 2: Surveillance Cameras

All participants (L1, L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S4, S5 and S6) pinpointed a long-term strategy that may be the advocacy on the use of surveillance cameras in most business places, houses, and hotspot areas.

L1, *"It is high time that we should advocate for the use of surveillance cameras to ensure that an analysis can be obtained after the crime has been committed to trace the criminal modus operandi"*.

LA, *"It is important in my case to indicate that they should be encourage preventive measures by private parties such as the use of surveillance cameras to track the criminal behaviours of robbers"*.

Theme 3: Stringent Measures

Eight participants (L2, L3, L4, S1, S2, S4, S5 and S6) were of the opinion that there is a need for the government to introduce stringent measures on those found guilty of robbery crimes to send a clear message of the stance of the government on crime that disrupts economic prospects.

The punishment given to them by our courts is not sufficient, therefore, there is a need to introduce strong measures to prevent those who would want to be criminals in future. You cannot have a situation where these robbers pay fines and are released on bail because they have money. When you look at robbery crimes, there are always committed in syndicates, which makes it challenging to handle, therefore, arresting one individual, while there will always be an outsider for such a person to be bailed out by a compatriot who is outside.

In this case, they are likely to afford any amount imposed by the court in terms of fines, further promoting these acts to continue. If for instance, there are no options of fines but a direct sentence of imprisonment, those that would like to

commit crimes would think twice before they engage themselves in such activities especially if the chances of being caught is higher.

Theme 4: Benchmarking Practice

Five participants (L1, L2, L4, S1, S5 and S6) identified benchmarking as a long-term solution to robbery.

L4, *"Given that there are countries that have done well in terms of reducing robberies it could be appropriate to benchmark the best practices from other countries."*

Since I (sic) came here, I (sic) never heard about anyone talking about benchmarking in pursuit of reducing crimes of concern. [Perhaps] with the study of this nature, the time is right to influence this sort of interaction, to lean from the best and contextualise the strategies that may assist not only the City Police but the Namibian Police Force too (S6).

Discussion of the Findings

From the respondents, four were females and six were males. This implies that the data collected was from both genders which consequently eliminated the possibility of having the data from one gender. This consideration was very important given that stereotypes regarding gender may also contribute to how issues are perceived in society including how crime is perceived. For those in leadership, it was essential to ensure that those that are responsible for giving strategic direction to the City Police are included in the study from the onset. To this end, the study results are relevant given that leaders with more experience in the operations of the Windhoek City Police and are knowledgeable in crime related matters were included. On the other hand, the subordinates were equally essential because their duties include but are not limited to crime prevention through patrols and stop and search methods. Therefore, the study captured leadership aspects at the strategic level and operational aspects from the ground.

It was also observed from the study that all participants that took part in the study had more than three years of work experience as City Police officials, while 3(30%) were within three and six years of work experience. The majority (seven of the respondents) had seven and more years of work experience. This entails that all those that participated have the necessary knowledge and experience in the City Police.

On the factors contributing to robberies in Windhoek, the result indicates that the police-community-strained relationship is one of the major contributing factors to the incidents of robberies. In explaining the above findings, two aspects should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the role of public members in addressing crime. Secondly, the extent to which City Police may address the crimes of robbery alone. In this context, it can be deduced from the study findings that the police require citizen cooperation and stakeholder engagement to address the crimes of robbery in Windhoek. This can be justified by the fact that those who commit crimes of robbery are residents who live in the community and are well-known by community members. As such, their modus of operandi can be intercepted when there is intelligence -led policing. In this case, it is also vital to indicate that intelligence -led policing is only possible with the willingness of the masses and not only be limited to certain individuals in providing the police with information. Secondly, it was clear that when criminals recognise that there are unlikely to be caught, they are further motivated to

be involved in robbing people. Thirdly, the lack of involvement in conventional activities was also recognised in the study to contribute to the crimes of robbery. This is because conventional activities ensure that youth are engaged and make them busy and makes them become productive members of society. Moreover, unemployment is cited as a major contributor not only to the crimes of robbery but all other crimes. This finding relates to the fact that poverty forces people to engage in robberies. This may be explained by the nature of humanity in which every human being seeks ways to survive in any environment he finds him or herself. In this case, unemployment exposes people to likely engage in crime to survive, especially youth who are flocking to cities in search of a decent life. Unlike other crimes, robbery is a quick source of getting income, given that most crimes of robbery target cash in transit cars, banking facilities, business institutions and wealthy homes. This may imply that the pattern and the behaviour of those involved are to steal huge sums of money in the shortest time. This finding correlates with a study conducted by McLean and Densley (2022) ^[16], in which it was found that those involved in robberies are mainly those that are poor and are unemployed. However, this result should be interpreted with caution considering that the possibility also exists that even those that are employed and financially stable but are greedy, might be involved in criminal activities for selfish reasons. On the other hand, the lack of stringent measures when found guilty, appear to be a motivating factor for the continued robbery cases in Windhoek. The finding above attest to the fact that when people commit robbery and are found guilty by the courts, there are likely to be released by paying fines which of course in most cases can afford such amounts since the possibility of them being involved in criminal activities of such nature is always high. When those would be criminals observe that the chances of being released are high when caught, then it motivates them to continue robbing people. A different view may be observed in this regard, for instance when people are aware that the crime carries significant punishment, they are likely to refrain from committing such crimes.

The study established that peer pressure and family factors influence the behaviour of criminals which determines whether they continue to be part of the criminal syndicate or not. In this regard, an important conclusion from the study can be made, poor families tend to accept whatever means are available from their children to bring food to the table. This perhaps may contribute to why they are not being reported to the police. Moreover, considering the fact that when children are arrested, they will be required to pay bail or risk having them in prison for many years. When all these factors are considered, family members of those that are engaging in criminal activities, tend not to be willing to report their family members engaged in crime. Consequently, promoting the continuation of the commission of crime.

The second study objective was aimed at ascertaining the role of the Windhoek City Police in curbing the scourge of robbery as a crime, taking cognisance of their capabilities. The result in this regard was twofold, firstly, the study established that the Windhoek City Police is not effective in addressing robberies. Explaining the ineffectiveness of the City Police in addressing robbery is also essential to be reminded that there are force multipliers or collective

security institutions that have recognised that the security of a person requires major efforts from many stakeholders.

This is the result of myriad of studies that have been conducted and concluded that it is institutionally impossible to only entrust the police alone to be responsible for preservation of security. Again, this result attests to the fact that the crime of robbery is of concern currently and as such this demonstrates a call for the City Police and the Namibian Police to devise better ways to arrest the situation of robberies. This result is consistent with a recent study undertaken by Mabuku (2022), which vividly showed that there is no way the police alone can address insecurity necessitated by the increase in crime. The reason that motivates criminals to continue with activities of crime cannot be effectively addressed by the police alone.

Secondly, the study also established that the City Police are effective in addressing the crime of robbery. This was one of the astonishing results that emerged from the study. However, such a variation in the effectiveness of the City Police to address robbery may be necessitated by the interpretation or the misunderstanding of the term effectiveness. Even though to a large extent the majority believe that the police are not effective.

The third objective was aimed at finding out whether the current strategies employed by the City Police in reducing robbery are effective or not. In this regard, the study discovered that the City Police are not effective. The possibility is also high that without the intervention of the police, the situation could be more detrimental than it currently is. On the contrary, the study still established that the City Police strategies that are aimed at addressing robberies have been effective, this is explained by the reason that robbers in some cases are caught by the police. This result perhaps could be explained on a comparison basis. In justifying this finding, is important to remember that when analysing the crime situation in terms of robberies in Southern Africa, Namibia is relatively one of the countries where robberies are few in comparison to other countries. This explanation can further be interpreted with caution, considering that the population also may play a significant role since Namibia is one of the less populated countries in Africa.

The last study objective was intended to establish a long-term solution to robberies. In this regard, the study discovered that the appointment of a focal committee could be one of the best strategies that the City Police could adopt in trying to curb the crimes of robbery. This finding may be further explained in line with the would-be role of the committee and its composition. This committee would comprise of stakeholders in the security industry, such as the Namibian National Police, Namibia Correctional Service, Namibia Central Intelligence Service, and others.

On the accelerated use of surveillance cameras or CCTV as one of the important considerations to address the robberies in all hotspots, when criminals are aware that they are likely to be caught on camera, then the chances of committing robberies are limited. Therefore, if CCTV is installed at various prominent places, in cash in transit vehicles, houses, and hotspot areas then crimes could be reduced. Furthermore, with surveillance cameras, the chances are that the police may analyse the modus operandi and the common trend that criminals use to commit robberies, in the end, proper strategies may be employed that could assist the police to reduce robberies.

Another important strategy is the use of stringent measures to deter future criminal activities related to robberies. This is because if the measures imposed are stiffer, they serve as a deterrence to those who intend or continue robbing people. Therefore, this means that for as long as the possibility of those committing robberies are released through fines, they are more likely to continue engaging themselves in this sort of criminal behaviour. Furthermore, prompting those who are not caught to carry on committing crimes.

Benchmarking is also another solution to the curbing of robberies in Windhoek. Benchmarking ensures that an organisation is on par with the latest trends in the global sphere and adopts strategies that are necessary and useful to address a myriad of problems towards eradicating robberies in the City of Windhoek.

The Impacts of Robbery on the Livelihood of Society

Robberies impact everyone indirectly or directly (Barthuly, 2019) ^[3], on the continent, Kayira (2022) ^[9], regionally (Kemp, 2020) and nationally (Mabuku, 2022). The effects include individual trauma, fear, and anxiety, affecting people's contribution to society (Ugwuoke, Obinna, Ameh, Mohammed & Akor, 2020) ^[27]. For Jonathan, Olusola, Bernadin and Inoussa (2021) ^[8], the effects of robbery include economic losses since its occurrence frightens people within or away from the place of residence, affecting their role in economic activities. From this assertion, people's contribution to the economy and their role becomes minimal, affecting the country's economic activities and means of survival.

Robbery Prevention Strategies

The involvement of stakeholders is essential to address the crime of robberies. The police and municipal police may be effective to a minimal extent, hence the need for the involvement of other stakeholders like community members to be reporting robbery cases (Mabuku, 2022:67). The police need to have sufficient informers to provide information before crimes are committed (Mkhwanazi, Owolawi, Mapayi & Aiyetoro, 2020) ^[17]. In terms of using informers, perhaps they could assist law enforcement especially paid informers could be motivated to provide information since they are remunerated for their work.

Finally, using sophisticated technology to deter and detect crime before it occurs can also assist greatly (Soto, Riega-Virú & Lara, 2021). This could include the use of drones. When one looks at the technological aspect, it may be true when considering that many criminals have escaped the law due to using advanced technology which compels law enforcement, including the municipal police, to be on par or ahead of criminals in technology advancement.

Secondly, the credibility of the study was achieved by the data collection process which ensured that the transcription of data was based on the facts and opinions that participants presented. Thirdly, transferability was ensured because of using those with three years or more in terms of work experience. Lastly, confirmability was ensured by representing data from respondents, not the preconceived opinions of the researcher on the topic and by linking the empirical data to the literature (Korstjens & Moser, 2018) ^[12].

Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Windhoek

City Police crime prevention strategies in reducing robberies in Windhoek. Globally, it is acknowledged that the crime of robbery is persisting at the highest rate and is considered a crime that predominantly affects society given its wide range of occurrences in several locations and times. The study concludes that, in Namibia, armed robberies in various forms have been reported and this has become a great concern, this is despite the presence of the Namibian Police Force and City Police in Windhoek. The reason attributed to this, the study concludes that is due to factors such as the high cost of living, unemployment, lack of visible policing and community policing causes robberies that cannot be addressed by the police and subsequently, ineffective strategies employed by the City Police to address robberies.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following are recommended:

- The study recommends the appointment of a focal committee whose responsibilities will include, among others, initiating well researched strategies for addressing robberies.
- The study further recommends installing and accelerating the use of surveillance cameras or CCTV not only on the streets to trap speeding drivers but, if possible, in most hot spots for crime.
- A new law could be introduced that every business in town should be installed with CCTV cameras and alarm systems to increase the chances of criminals being caught and proper analysis of the footage for possible robberies.
- The study recommends the introduction of stringent measures in imprisoning those found guilty of the crime of robbery. This will send a stronger message to those that would want to engage themselves in the act.
- Finally, benchmarking from other police agencies outside Namibia could offer best practices from other countries.

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