



Gender Differences in Risk Perception and Precautionary Behaviour among Residents of Nigerian Yoruba Traditional City

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Abstract

The study examined gender differences in crime perception, feeling of safety and the use of precaution measures among the residents of Nigerian Traditional Yoruba City. Systematic sampling method was used to obtain data for this study. It was revealed that women were more fearful than men walking alone in the dark as the odds of a woman feeling unsafe walking alone after dark were approximately 4(3.61) times higher than that of a man. Findings further showed that 23% of women and 17% of men reported that they routinely carry something for self defence. While other socio-economic and demographic characteristics were significant explanatory variables in crime perception, feeling of safety and the use of precaution measures, they did not significantly reduce the influence of gender. Fear of perceived crime, avoidance behaviour and routine precaution by controlling for gender alone showed that the odds of a woman in Yoruba traditional town were respectively 3.01, 6.32, 7.16 times that of a man. The study therefore concluded that gender remains an important variable in explaining the differences in crime perception, feeling of safety and the use of precaution measures that limit daily activities in traditional Yoruba cities in Nigeria.

Keywords: Gender, Victimization, Avoidance behaviour, Routine precaution, Fear, Crime.

Introduction

Recently, fear of crime, risk perception and the use of precaution measures have become an increasingly significant concern of spatial planners, criminologists, victimologists, policy-makers, politicians, policing organizations, the media and the

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general public. This is because safety from crime, violence at home, on the streets and in the general environment as well as observed and perceived feeling of risk are important parameters for determining residents' quality of life and are as well viewed as uncompromising products of good governance (Agbola, 2004). In this regard, while the majority of residents living in Nigerian Yoruba Traditional Cities were satisfied with their personal safety from crime, many have been found in the habit of taking precautions to protect themselves from being victimized and some experience fear of crime on daily basis (Badiora 2012; Badiora, Fadoyin, & Omisore, 2013).

Evidence from previous researches around the World show that perceived risk of victimization and uses of precautions are not equal between men and women nor used equally among all age groups (Reid & Konrad, 2004; Gannon 2005; Gannon and Taylor-Butts 2006 & Keown, 2007; Hilinski, Pentecost-Neeson, & Andrews, 2011). In similar vein, Gannon (2005) and Gannon and Taylor-Butts (2006) argue that it is likely that perceptions and fear of crime, as well as the use of precautions to avoid becoming a victim of crime differ between those living in urban and rural areas. In addition, even between those living in urban areas of different sizes, it is likely that perceptions and fear of crime, as well as the use of precautions to avoid becoming a victim of crime differ (Keown 2007a; 2007b).

Previous studies such as Skogan and Maxfield (1981); Gordon, LeBailly and Riger (1982) and Gannon and Taylor-Butts (2006) have also noted that there are differences between men and women in the use of certain protective measures such as installing special security door locks and burglar alarms for protection but these are less pronounced than the gender differences seen in precautions that limit some forms of daily activities. This may be due to the fact that installing special security door locks and burglar alarms are lifetime measures which are more focused on activities related to household collective actions and experiences than on an individual's actions and experiences.

Using data obtained from the survey of residents in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, this study examines differences in perceptions of crime, feeling of safety and use of precautionary behaviour to avoid victimization for the residents. Perceptions considered include perceptions of neighbourhood crime and measures of fear of crime. Precautions taken by men and women to avoid victimization include behaviour that limit some forms of daily activity which include staying home at night to avoid being a victim of crime (avoidance) and habitual behaviour which are engaged in to reduce exposure to crime and limit the possibility of victimization are locking doors from behind when alone at home, carrying something for self-defense and planning route with safety in mind.

This paper specifically focuses on determining whether there are differences in the perceptions of neighbourhood crime, feeling of safety and the use of precaution measures between men and women in Nigerian Yoruba Traditional City. If existed, the paper further examines whether any gender differences persist once other socio-economic and demographic variables such as age, income, level of education, household size among others that may influence perception of neighbourhood crime, feeling of safety as well as the use of precautions have been taken into consideration.

Methods

The study population consists of the adult resident not below the age of 22 years and who had lived in the study area for at least 5 years. The group for this study was chosen because it represents a significant portion of the population under study and this age group

may exhibit different perceptions of neighbourhood crime and feeling of safety than young ones below age of 22 years. Primary data were obtained from a total of 343 streets that were identified from different residential areas of the town. These comprises of all the streets that were formally named by the Local Government Authorities of the town. One out of every five street (20%) was purposively selected. From the selected streets, a total of 3097 buildings were identified and every tenth building (10%) where a household representative person per floor was selected using systematic sampling for the purpose of questionnaire administration. A total number of 357 questionnaires were administered on household representative person while 334 were retrieved for analyses. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion

In this section, perception of neighbourhood crime, feeling of safety and precautionary behaviour among the household representative person was presented by gender. The research findings are discussed under the various sub-headings below. Unless where otherwise stated, the Tables through which information were summarized are products of the survey carried out by the authors in 2012.

1. Perception of Neighbourhood Crime by Gender

The study investigated perception of crime among the residents of Ile-Ife, Nigeria. In determining this, household representative person (men and women) were provided with a list of crime identified in the literature. They were further instructed to indicate the rate of occurrence of each of the identified crime type. They were to express their opinion using one of five Likert scales of ‘very frequent’ (VF), ‘frequent’ (F), ‘just frequent’ (JF), ‘not frequent’ (NF) and ‘not at all frequent’ (NAF).

The analyses of the ratings indicated by household representative person from the Likert’s scales adopted evolved into an index called “Crime Rate of Occurrence Index” (CROI). To arrive at CROI, rating value of 5,4,3,2 and 1 were respectively attached to ‘very frequent’ (VF), ‘frequent’ (F), ‘just frequent’ (JF), ‘not frequent’ (NF) and ‘not at all frequent’ (NAF). The index for each type of crime was arrived by dividing the Summation of Rating Value (SRV) by the total number of responses.

The SRV for each type was obtained through the addition of the product of the number of responses to each type and the respective weight value attached to each rating.

This is mathematically express as $SRV = \sum_{i=1}^5 x_i y_i$ (1)

Where:

SRV= Summation of Rating Value;

x_i = number of respondents to rating i;

y_i =the weight assigned to a value (i=1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

$$CROI = \frac{SRV}{\sum_{i=1}^5 x_i}$$
 (2)

The index for each of the identified crime type thus takes a value of between 5 and 1. The nearer the value to 5, the higher is the rate of occurrence that residents attached to such crime type under consideration. Furthermore, the mean index for men and women was computed. This was obtained by summing the indices of crime types and dividing by the number of the identified crime ($n=32$). This is denoted by $CROI_m$ and $CROI_f$. The summary is presented in Table 1a.

Presented in Table 1a was the summary of crime rate in Ile-Ife, Nigeria by gender. The average crime rate of occurrence ($CROI_m$) for the study area was 2.27 from the perception of men while it was 2.77 from the perception of women ($CROI_f$). Thus, rate of crime in Nigerian Yoruba Traditional city as perceived by women was higher than that of the men. However, relative to men perception, three groups of crime occurrences could be identified. These were group that had positive deviation, those with negative deviation and group with zero deviation. Positive deviation is an indication that residents of Ile-Ife might be facing the challenges of such crime type. It was thus evident from the Table 1a that those crime types perceived to have higher magnitude of threat in the town included store breaking, burglary, house breaking, false pretences and cheating, vehicle hijacking, rape, robbery and vehicle theft. Others included unlawful possession, internet scam, stealing and pilfering, pick pocketing, attempted rape, breach of public peace, sexual harassment, prostitution and drug offences.

Men perceived therefore that the five most occurring crime types in Ile-Ife were store breaking, house breaking, burglary, vehicle theft and stealing. An index of 3.25 was computed for store breaking, 3.14 for house breaking while 3.05, 3.03 and 2.92 were respectively computed for burglary, vehicle theft and stealing. This phenomenon is peculiar in that the five most occurring crime types were all against properties. Store breaking was further established as the most occurring crime in the town while manslaughter was the least occurring types of crime in the study area relative to men's perception.

As perceived by women, the summary of the crime rate in the Yoruba traditional city was also presented in Table 1a. It was evident that two groups of crime occurrences could be identified. These are group that had positive deviation, those with negative deviation. With an index of 3.44, attempted rape was perceived by women to be the major challenge in Nigerian Yoruba traditional city. The next four crime which constitute major challenge from women perception included house breaking ($CROI=3.33$), sexual harassment ($CROI=3.27$), store breaking ($CROI=3.27$) and breach of public peace ($CROI=3.25$). Other crime types which also have magnitude of threat in the town included pick pocketing ($CROI=3.16$), stealing and pilfering ($CROI=3.23$), child abuse ($CROI=3.21$), drug offences ($CROI=3.06$) and prostitution ($CROI=3.05$). Others were rape, robbery, internet scam, unlawful possession, child abandonment, receiving stolen properties, impersonation and assassination.

Women were of the opinion that crime types such as manslaughter, vehicle theft, arson, kidnapping, occultism and other related harm, assassination, vehicle hijacking, child stealing, child abuse, impersonation, attempted suicide, murder, attempted murder, suicide and slave dealing were not major threat in the town. This was evident as these crimes were rated below the average rate of occurrence index in the study area ($CROI$) (see Table 1a). This gave an indication that these crime types from women perception might not constitute major challenge in this area. Women were also of the opinion that suicide (mean deviation of -0.85) was the least occurring types of crime in the area.

Table 1a. Perception of Crime Rate by Gender in Ile-Ife, Nigeria

MEN				WOMEN			
Crime related activities	CRO I	Mean Dev.	Rank	Crime related activities	CRO I	Mean Dev	Rank
Store Breaking	3.25	0.98	1 st	Attempted Rape	3.44	0.57	1 st
House Breaking	3.14	0.87	2 nd	House Breaking	3.33	0.56	2 nd
Burglary	3.05	0.78	3 rd	Sexual harassment	3.27	0.50	3 rd
Vehicle Theft	3.03	0.76	4 th	Store Breaking	3.27	0.50	4 th
Stealing and Pilfering	2.92	0.65	5 th	Breach of Public Peace	3.25	0.48	5 th
Robbery	2.81	0.54	6 th	Stealing and Pilfering	3.23	0.46	6 th
Sexual harassment	2.63	0.36	7 th	Child Abuse	3.21	0.43	7 th
Breach of Public Peace	2.61	0.34	8 th	Pick pocketing	3.16	0.37	8 th
Attempted Rape	2.6	0.33	9 th	Drug offences	3.06	0.29	9 th
Internet Scam	2.49	0.22	10 th	Prostitution	3.05	0.28	10 th
False Pretences	2.48	0.21	11 th	Burglary	3.02	0.25	11 th
Pick pocketing	2.48	0.21	12 th	Robbery	2.97	0.20	12 th
Unlawful Possession	2.4	0.13	13 th	Internet Scam	2.97	0.20	13 th
Prostitution	2.39	0.12	14 th	Unlawful Possession	2.95	0.18	14 th
Rape	2.35	0.08	15 th	Child Abandonment	2.92	0.15	15 th
Drug offences	2.32	0.05	16 th	Receiving Stolen Property	2.89	0.12	16 th
Vehicle hijacking	2.31	0.04	17 th	Impersonation	2.88	0.11	17 th
Child Abandonment	2.27	0	18 th	Assassination	2.84	0.07	18 th
Impersonation	2.25	-0.02	19 th	Rape	2.69	-0.08	19 th
Receiving Stolen Property	2.25	-0.02	20 th	False Pretences Cheating	2.70	-0.07	20 th
Cultic and related harms	2.04	-0.23	21 th	Vehicle Theft	2.73	-0.04	21 th
Kidnapping	1.93	-0.34	22 th	Arson	2.73	-0.04	22 th
Arson	1.9	-0.37	23 th	Cultic and related harms	2.75	-0.02	23 th
Assassination	1.9	-0.37	24 th	Slave Dealing	1.77	-1.00	24 th
Child stealing	1.7	-0.57	25 th	Murder	2.03	-0.74	25 th
Child Abuse	1.69	-0.58	26 th	Kidnapping	2.63	-0.15	26 th
Attempted suicide	1.68	-0.59	27 th	Vehicle hijacking	2.59	-0.18	27 th
Suicide	1.58	-0.69	28 th	Attempted suicide	2.39	-0.38	28 th
Attempted murder	1.56	-0.71	29 th	Attempted murder	2.25	-0.52	29 th
Slave Dealing	1.55	-0.72	30 th	Child stealing	2.05	-0.72	30 th
Murder	1.51	-0.76	31 th	Manslaughter	1.95	-0.82	31 th
Manslaughter	1.44	-0.83	32 nd	Suicide	1.92	-0.85	32 nd

$$CROI_m = \sum CROI = 72.51, CROI_m = \frac{\sum CROI}{(N = 32)} = \frac{72.51}{32} = 2.27$$

$$CROI_f = \sum CROI = 88.99, CROI_f = \frac{\sum CROI}{(N = 32)} = \frac{88.99}{32} = 2.77$$

Table 1b. Chi-Square Test of Significant Difference in Men and Women Perception of Crime Rate

Measurement	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	134.312**	3	0.001**
Likelihood Ratio	109.347	3	0.018
Liner by Linear Association	23.025	1	0.006
No. of Valid Cases	334	Note: **Significant at $p < 0.05$	

A comparative analysis of men and women perception of crime around them revealed some significant differences. For instance, while men perceived store breaking to be the major challenge in Yoruba traditional city, women were of the opinion that it was attempted rape. Next in importance to both men and women was housebreaking. However, the rates of occurrence accrued to this crime type differed by gender. While men put the occurrence index of housebreaking at 3.14, women were of the opinion that it was 3.33. Furthermore, while burglary was ranked 3rd by men, it was ranked 11th by women and while sexual harassment was ranked 3rd by women, it was ranked 7th by men. Going by this logic of differences in opinion therefore, the statistical validation of these consistent claims was examined. This was tested using Chi-square statistics (χ^2) and the summary is presented in Table 1b. Interestingly, it was statistically validated that there was a significant difference in the opinion of men and women as regard their perception about the rate of occurrence of crime they perceive around them. The value of $\chi^2 = 134.312$ at $p = 0.01$ (where $p < 0.05$) confirmed this.

2. Fear of Perceived Crime and Precautionary Behaviour by Gender

In order to understand the importance of gender differences in fear of perceived crime and precautionary behaviour, logistic regression was used in addition to Chi-square tests. In logistic regression models, it is possible to see what unique contribution a variable (in this case gender) makes toward understanding a factor or phenomena (in this case fear of perceived crime and precautionary behaviour) while Chi-Square tests show the statistical significance in these gender differences. Findings in this section are presented in Table 2.

It was revealed that women were more fearful than men as 74% of women felt unsafe walking alone in the dark. In contrast, only 27% of men felt this way. The chi-square computed showed that significant variation exists in feeling unsafe while walking in Night ($\chi^2 = 102.312$; $p = 0.000$). This was further confirmed by the odds of a woman feeling unsafe walking alone after dark were approximately 4 (3.61) times higher than that of a man in Nigerian Yoruba Traditional town. Another measure of fear is whether a person feels worried when home alone. While $\chi^2 = 98.11$ at $p = 0.001$ confirmed the statistical significant difference in men (20%) and women feeling very worried when home alone in the night. The odds of a woman feeling worried when at home alone in the night were approximately 3 (2.54) times higher than that of a man. It is therefore established that while men and women in Nigeria Yoruba Traditional town differ substantially in the neighbourhood crime perceived around them, there were also significant differences between men and women with respect to their fear of perceived crime.

Having examined perception of neighbourhood crime and feeling of safety, the study investigated precautionary behaviour to avoid victimization by the residents. One type of precautionary practice in Nigerian Yoruba traditional town is avoidance behaviour. Avoidance behaviour is the restrictions individuals place on their own movements in order to protect themselves from crime (Miethe, 1995; Gannon & Taylor-Butts, 2006; Keown, 2007). This restriction of activity has important societal consequences because it limits personal freedom and also because it can change urban interactions and patterns of mobility in, for example, public places like shopping areas and community gathering places (Gannon, 2005).

Avoidance behaviour was measured by asking whether individuals stay at home in the night because they are afraid to go out alone. The study revealed that while only 19% of men in Yoruba Traditional town avoided going out alone at night, 67% of women engaged in this behaviour as a means to avoid becoming a victim of crime. The logistic regression put the odds of a woman practicing avoidance behaviour to protect herself from crime at 6 (6.31) times higher than that of a man. Therefore, while it was previously confirmed that men and women in Nigeria Yoruba Traditional town differ substantially in the neighbourhood crime perceived around them and fear of these perceived crime, there is significant differences between men and women in their avoidance behaviour practices to reduce their risk of becoming victim of these prevailing crime in their neighborhoods. The $\chi^2 = 99.403$ at $p = 0.000$ confirmed this.

Table 2. Fear of Perceived Crime and Precautionary Behaviours

Factors	%Men	%Women	Pearson Chi-Square Value (X^2)	df	Significant Value (p)	Odds of Women compare to Men
Fear of Perceived Crime						
1 Feeling unsafe while walking alone in Night	230 (27%)	104 (74%)	102.312	3	0.000*	3.61*
2 Feeling worried when home alone in the night	230 (20%)	104 (60%)	98.111	3	0.001*	2.44*
Avoidance Behaviour						
1 Staying home at night for afraid to go out alone	230 (19%)	104 (67%)	99.403	3	0.000*	6.31*
Routine precautions						
1 Locking doors from behind when alone at home	230 (34%)	104 (78%)	84.123	3	0.000*	6.67*
2 Carrying Something for Self Defence	230 (14%)	104 (23%)	109.003	3	0.004*	2.01*
3 Planning/Selecting Route with Safety in Mind	230 (35%)	104 (61%)	87.908	3	0.001*	5.63*

*Statistically significant difference between men and women at $p < 0.05$

In addition to avoidance behaviour, precautions that limit daily activity can also involve behaviour adopted habitually to protect one from becoming a victim. These are usually practice when away from home (Gannon & Taylor-Butts, 2006). These are what this study referred to as routine precautions. Similar to avoidance behaviour, the use of routine precautions can have an impact on personal freedom. However, more importantly, they serve to protect the individual. For this study, three routine precautionary behaviour were examined. These were locking doors from behind when alone at home, carrying something to defend one or alert other people and planning one route with safety in mind. As was the case with avoidance behaviour, women were much more likely than men to use routine precautions as gender differences were found in each of these separate behaviour.

The least common routine precaution for both men and women in Nigerian Yoruba traditional town was carrying something for self-defense with 23% of women and 17% of men reported that they routinely engaged in this activity. While about 60% of women planned their route with safety in mind, this was the case for 34% of men. Furthermore, it was evident that 34% of men and 78% of women routinely locked doors from behind when alone at home. Significant variations also exist among men and women in Yoruba traditional town as regard the use of this routine precaution. It was revealed that carrying something for self defence was significant at $p=0.004$ and the odds of a woman using this precaution was approximately 2 (2.01) times higher than that of a man. Similarly planning route with safety in mind approximately for women was 6 (5.63) times that of the man.

Furthermore, significant difference exist in the routine precaution of locking door from behind while alone at home among women and men ($\chi^2 = 84.123$ at $p= 0.000$) as odd of a woman engaging in this precaution was approximately 7(6.67) times that of the man. To this end, while women and men in Yoruba traditional town had different perception about their neighbourhood crime and fear of being victimized, precautionary behaviour also varied significantly between men and women. This is in line with past researches (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Ferraro, 1995; Gilchrist et al. 1998; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Gannon & Taylor-Butts, 2006; Keown, 2007b; Hilinski et al., 2011).

In order to understand whether gender remains important once other socio-economic and demographic factors have been accounted for, logistic regression was used. In logistic regression models, it is possible to see what unique contribution each factor makes toward understanding fear of perceived crime, avoidance behaviour and routine precaution while controlling or removing the influence of other variables. Fear of perceived crime, avoidance behaviour and routine precaution behaviour are examined in separate models.

The importance of some range of socio-economic and demographic factors except gender in explaining fear and precautionary behaviour was first examined. The technique used was the stepwise regression model which explains the effects of each factor on the dependent variables (in this case fear of perceived crime and precautionary behaviour). It also provides the net effect of variation of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Significant variable were selected based on the F-ratio value. It should be noted that F-ratio value of 4.0 or higher indicates a significant relationship in the multivariate context.

From the summary of F-ratio presented in Table 3a therefore, all the independent variables (socio-economic and demographic factors) observed were found to have significant association with dependent variables (fear of perceived crime, avoidance behaviour and routine precaution). However, the model developed in Table 3b showed

that while many of these other socio-economic and demographic characteristics were significant explanatory variables in fear of perceived crime, avoidance behaviour and routine precaution, they did not significantly reduce the influence of gender. As presented in Table 3b, examining fear of perceived crime by controlling for gender alone showed that the odds of a woman in Yoruba traditional town were 3.01 times that of a man. Even after controlling for these confounding socio-economic and demographic variables (age, income, education, occupation, year spent in pursuit education, length of residency and household size), the odds ratio remains significantly higher as women were 2.81 times more likely to fear the perceived crime than their man counterpart.

Table 3a. Analysis of Factors Influencing Fear and Precautionary Behaviour

S/ N	Variables	Beta		Cumm (R ²)		F-Ratio		Sig. level
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Fear of Perceived Crime								
1	Age	0.782	0.713	0.594	0.694	21.44	17.34	0.01*
2	Occupation	0.694	0.641	0.563	0.513	35.27	23.01	0.01*
3	Level of Education	0.522	0.412	0.641	0.641	21.58	22.08	0.01*
4	Year spent in pursuit of education	0.641	0.311	0.523	0.533	22.71	22.02	0.01*
5	Length of Residency	0.712	0.562	0.573	0.573	31.52	11.42	0.01*
6	Household size	0.601	0.341	0.694	0.624	29.52	19.32	0.01*
7	Income	0.411	0.712	0.721	0.621	24.05	41.01	0.01*
Avoidance Behaviour								
1	Age	0.419	0.841	0.432	0.784	15.34	14.01	0.01*
2	Occupation	0.598	0.753	0.401	0.493	21.03	21.05	0.01*
3	Level of Education	0.567	0.431	0.601	0.651	21.08	21.11	0.01*
4	Year spent in pursuit of education	0.465	0.231	0.511	0.353	32.02	15.14	0.01*
5	Length of Residency	0.633	0.671	0.507	0.733	21.42	11.21	0.01*
6	Household size	0.665	0.544	0.624	0.424	09.32	25.22	0.01*
7	Income	0.603	0.631	0.663	0.611	43.21	42.31	0.01*
Routine Precautions								
1	Age	0.711	0.694	0.712	0.694	11.01	18.32	0.01*
2	Occupation	0.714	0.513	0.813	0.513	15.21	44.11	0.01*
3	Level of Education	0.213	0.641	0.714	0.641	20.01	22.08	0.01*
4	Year spent in pursuit of education	0.302	0.533	0.633	0.533	24.14	23.02	0.01*
5	Length of Residency	0.612	0.573	0.643	0.573	23.11	14.42	0.01*
6	Household size	0.517	0.624	0.424	0.624	19.52	19.32	0.01*
7	Income	0.871	0.621	0.621	0.621	31.44	31.34	0.01*

N=334; Constant (*fear of perceived Crime*); 1.745 and 2.013 for Men and Women Respectively
Constant (*avoidance behaviour*); 1.433 and 1.564 for Men and Women Respectively
Constant (*routine precaution*); 2.414 and 1.601 for Men and Women Respectively

Table 3b. Comparison of odd ratios for gender and fear of perceived crime and Precautionary behaviour

Independents Variable	odds ratio unadjusted	odds ratio adjusted
Fear of Perceived Crime	3.01*	2.81*
Avoidance Behaviour	6.32*	6.02*
Routine Precaution	7.16*	6.96*

* Statistically significant difference between unadjusted and adjusted odds ratio at $p < 0.05$

The examination of avoidance behaviour by controlling for gender alone showed that the odds of a woman in the study area engaging in avoidance behaviour were 6.32 times higher than the odds of a man. While other influences (socio-economic and demographic variables) were added to the model, the odds ratio remains significantly higher for women as they were 6.02 times more likely to engage in avoidance behaviour (staying home at night for afraid to go out alone) than their man counterpart. Similarly, the odds of a woman using a routine precaution were 7.16 times higher than the odds of a man when no other influence (socio-economic and demographic variables) was taken into account. When the model was used to control for these socio-economic characteristics influences, women continued to have significantly higher odds of engaging in routine precautionary measures (6.96 times) compared to men. Thus, the study established that the influence of gender on fear of perceived crime and precautionary behaviour was not significantly changed by controlling for other socio-economic and demographic factors in the model. This is in line with past researches (Gordon, LeBailly, & Riger, 1982; Ferraro, 1995; Gilchrist, Bannister, & Ditton, 1998; Sutton & Farall, 2005; Keown, 2007a).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present data support the body of literature that reports women are more fearful of crime, believe they are more likely to be victimized and are more likely to engage in certain self-protective behaviours than men. This is evident as there are important differences between men and women with respect to perceived risk around them, feeling of safety as well as the avoidance and routine precautions they used to protect themselves from victimization. It further illustrates that aside gender; there were other important explanatory variables to these important differences. However, even after these explanatory variables have been controlled for, gender remains an important element in explaining the differences in respect to perceived risk, feeling of safety, avoidance and routine precautions among the residents.

To this end, how safe residents perceive themselves to be, how fearful they are of criminal victimization and to what extent they engage in self-protective behaviours have important security implications that should be of interest to government, community police and leaders. To help with these in Nigerian Traditional Yoruba city therefore, addressing risk of victimization must therefore include comprehensive self-defense training to reduce risk of victimization. In addition, policies aimed towards reducing women's fear of crime should focus on addressing the root causes of the fear in women, which is often an individual's perceived risk of being victimized. In many cases, particularly among women, perceived risk is actually much higher than actual risk. Thus, if women are provided with accurate information about their actual risk, their fear of being victimized might be reduced to their actual risk of victimization and by this; they will not be so consumed with fear. Neighbourhood administrators should use these findings and conclusions to better address residents' perceptions of crime through effective policies, programming and practical application of relevant research. It is ultimately the government responsibility to maintain a safe community, work to reduce residents' fear of crime, lessens the likelihood of victimization and encourage appropriate use of self-protective behaviours among the residents.

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