

Profiling of Armed Robbers Incarcerated at Zimbabwe Correctional Facility

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to profile armed robbers incarcerated at Zimbabwe correctional facility. A descriptive mixed research design was the blueprint that guided this study. Data were gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions. The study used a purposive sampling technique since the potential subjects were difficult to find due to the sensitivity nature of the population (prisoners) and the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data. Thematic analyses were used to analyse qualitative data. The sample size of the study was 34 male armed robbers. The results revealed that armed robbers in Zimbabwe are Zimbabwean-born black male adult who are between the ages of 20-45 years. They had attained Ordinary/advanced level education with either military training background or unemployed with a complex marital status. The current study further revealed that active and retired members of the security services sector were found to be the major perpetrators of armed robberies in Zimbabwe. The study also established that robbers are highly motivated by the need to support themselves and their family.

Keywords: profiling, armed robber, incarcerated, correctional facility.

INTRODUCTION

Criminal profiling is as a technique used to identify the perpetrator of a violent crime by identifying the personality and behavioral characteristics of the offender based upon an analysis of the crime committed. Globally profiling of armed robber prove to have positive correlation with reduction of armed robbery (Alison et al 2018, Raymond et al 2009, Barash, and Reshef & Brauner 2010). Literature shows that globally profiling of armed robbery plays a major role in the predicting and controlling of armed robbery (Woodhams and Toye, 2007). In Zimbabwe there is hardly any local information on profiling armed robbers, although local literature in Zimbabwe shows a significant rise of armed robbery cases. Lack of local literature in Zimbabwe about profiling of armed robbers suggest that armed robbers are not profiled, this makes it a grey area that need to be investigated. Hence, this research study will close that research gap.

Recognizing the varied character of armed robbery is crucial in order to create effective crime prevention tactics. Incidents of armed robbery can vary depending on whether the victim was a person or an organization, whether the offender was armed with a knife, firearm or other weapon, or whether the offence occurred on the street or in a commercial premise (Borzycki & Fuller 2014; Mouzos & Borzycki 2003). As a result, commercial organizations and law enforcement organizations continue to place a high priority on the prevention of armed robbery. The decision to profile incidents by location has its foundations in a routine activity theory (RAT) of crime (Cohen & Felson 1979). At its foundation, RAT contends that crime happens when three factors the existence of a motivated perpetrator, an appropriate target, and the lack of a skilled guardian converge simultaneously and geographically. The basic goal of many crime prevention measures, as highlighted by RAT, is to alter one or more of these components in order to reduce the likelihood that an offense would occur.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample size of this study was 34 male armed robbers incarcerated at Chikurubi maximum prison. Purposive sampling technique was adopted since it would allow the researcher to select who are most relevant to the study's objectives and generalize findings. The purposive sampling method helps to gain detailed understanding and insights of the research topic.

Procedure

A letter of support was obtained from the Department of Applied Psychology at University of Zimbabwe. An application letter was also written to the Officer Commanding Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Service Harare Metropolitan Province requesting for permission to conduct research in Chikurubi maximum and Chikurubi female prison and attached a supporting letter from University of Zimbabwe. Permission was granted and the researcher visited the two prison correctional facility and informed the Officer in Charge of the study, scheduled time to meet potential respondents (Armed robbers). Data collection took place in two phases. The preliminary stage involved a pilot study with 4 participants followed by the main study with a representative large sample of 34 armed robbers. Arrangements for collecting data were made with the Officer in Charge Chikurubi maximum Prison. Conveniently, two research assistants were chosen and trained to help with the data gathering from research participants. The research assistants were rehabilitation officers at Chikurubi Maximum Prison. The training enabled the research assistants understand the major goal of this study and the ethical considerations to be observed, so as to prevent harm to themselves and the respondents. A pilot study was undertaken by pre-testing the offender interview questionnaire on the four offenders who weren't involved in the main research. Before piloting, the instrument was examined for face and content validity.

Interviews took place at Chikurubi maximum security prison in the library room of each prison holes from 05 December 2022 to 03 January 2023. Data from convicted armed robbers incarcerated at Chikurubi maximum prison were collected using semi-structured questionnaires with open and close ended questions. The interviews took an average of 50 minutes to complete. Data analysis was done after the collection of data.

Validity

The instrument was examined for face, construct and content validity by consulting the supervisor who is an expert in the research area. This resulted in the reduction of the number of variables from 98 to 82 which actually addressed the research questions for this study. The use of both the English version and Shona version and mixed methodology enhanced the credibility of the findings as the weaknesses of one method is complemented by the strength of the other method.

Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS for the 35 close-ended questions. Table 1 shows the reliability coefficient of the 35 items of the questionnaire to be 0.71.

Reliability statistics of the offender

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| 0.71 | 35 |

Ethical consideration

Participants were given information regarding the aim, purpose, and objectives of the study, the make-up of the research team, and their role in the study. Participants were briefed on the study's goals, methodology, risks associated with participation, rights associated with participation, and debriefing on participant safety before being interviewed. The researcher asked for their signed consent to participate in the study. Also, it was made clear to the participants that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that they were free to leave at any time. In the current study, all individuals and data were maintained as anonymous as feasible. On the questionnaires there were no participant names. Participants received assurances from the researcher that the data they provided would not be disclosed to others unrelated to the study.

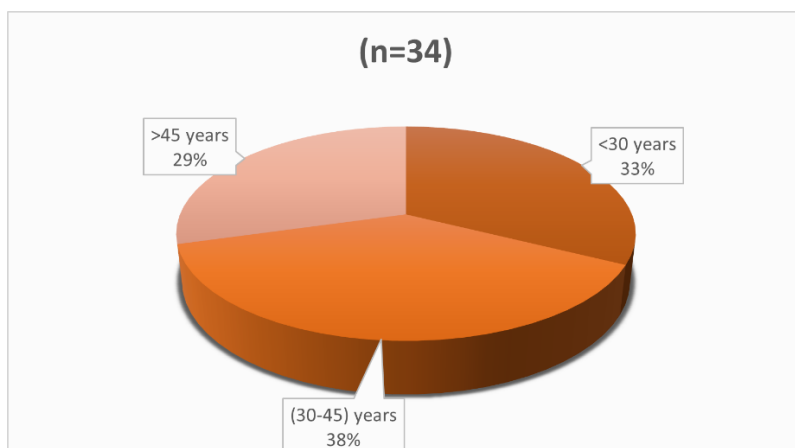
Data analysis

A data template was designed and tested in SPSS during the pilot stage. Template design entailed assigning text responses with numeric equivalents that is data coding. For example, on the variable on work status, employed was represented by 1 and unemployed by 2. The 34 questionnaires administered and returned from respondents (armed robbers) were given serial numbers from 01 to 034 and captured in SPSS. The serial numbers allocated to the questionnaires enabled data capturers to track easily the processing of each questionnaire, identify and rectify errors that occurred during the data capturing process. Once the data from all questionnaires were captured for statistical analysis, standard data cleaning techniques were implemented (For example, confirming all missing values against original questionnaires, checking for data integrity, cross-checking outliers on individual variables, etc.). The clean data set was then analysed and interpreted. In particular frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulation were the statistics employed to analyses the data. The data were cross-tabulated using the demographic factors (e.g. employment status, highest educational qualification and age). Tables and graphs produced in Word and Excel, respectively, were used to present the analysed data. Where it was deemed practicable and suitable, qualitative data interpretation was complemented with quantitative data.

Transcribed qualitative data responses from armed robbers were thematically analysed according to similarities, relationships and differences. Thematic analysis involved reading through the data set and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to identify themes. In this study the researcher's subjective was at the center of making sense of armed robbers characteristics and motives at Chikurubi correctional facility.

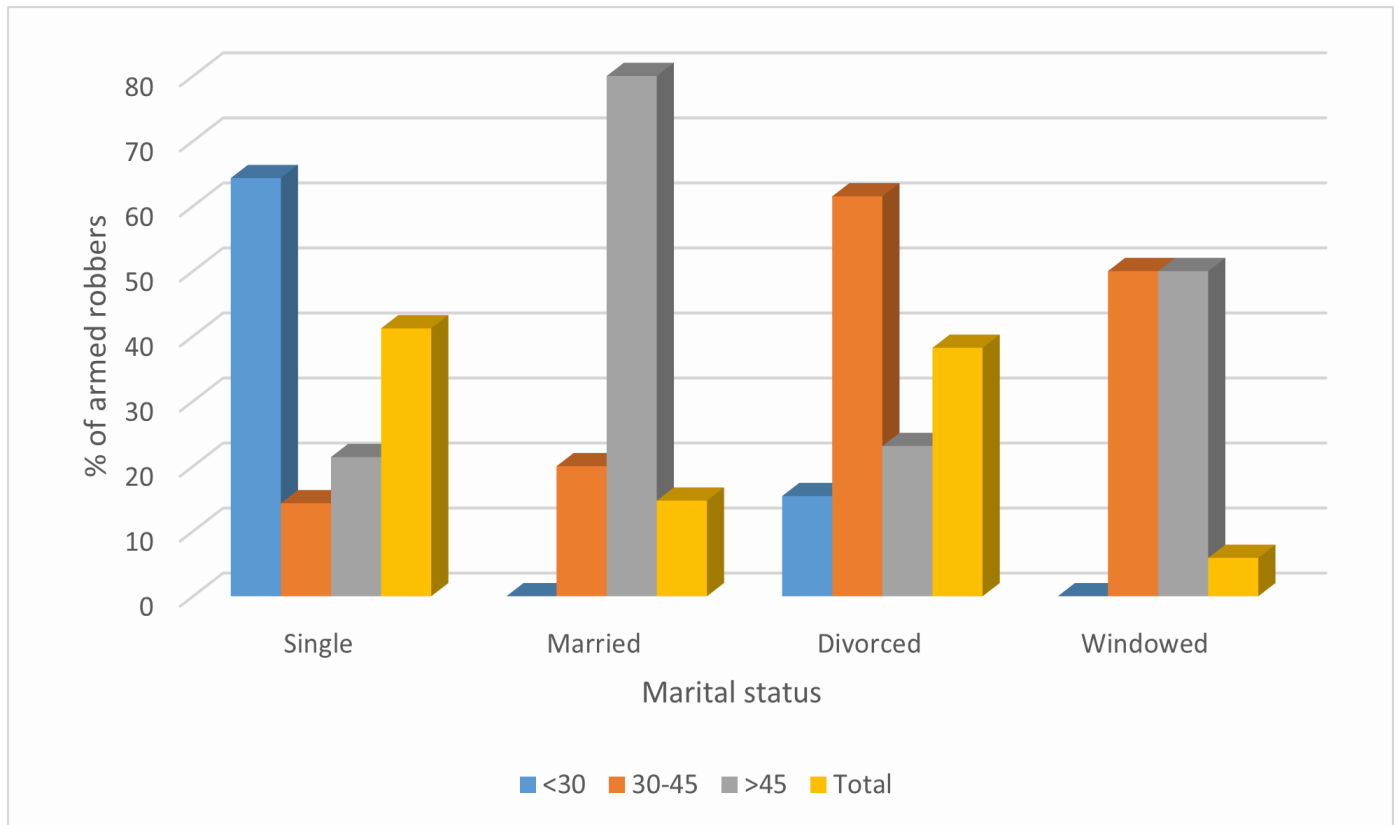
Findings

Environmental and socio-demographical characteristics of victims and offenders



Age of robbers at robbery

As can be seen from the figure most armed robbers (38%) were aged between 30 years and 45 years when they committed the crime. A significant number of these robberies (33%) were committed by armed robbers below the age of 30 years, while the remainder of the armed robbers (29%) were above 45 years of age. Results of the current study indicated that there is a link association between age of an armed robber and committing an armed robbery offence. Most armed robbers were adults under the age of 45 years, when the offence was committed.



Distribution by age and marital status of armed robbers

Results indicate that most armed robbers were single (41.2%) and under the age of 30 years (64.3%). Very few armed robbers were married (14.7%) and of these, 80% were above 45 years. A significant number of divorcees (38.2%) were armed robbers, 61.5% of them aged between 30 years and 45 years. Very few widows were involved in armed robberies (5.9%), all being 30 years and above. Results show that the age and marital status of the respondents are associated with committing an armed robbery offence. Young adults who were single and below the age of 30 years, and divorcees aged between 30 years and 45 years were identified as major perpetrators of armed robberies.

Table 2: Level of education versus work situation at the time of robbery

| Education level | full time | Part-time | Home duties | Casual | Unemployed | Retired | Others | total | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Primary | 0 | 14% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25% | 2 | 5.9% |
| Ordinary level | 22% | 71% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 75% | 24 | 70.5% |
| Advanced level | 78% | 14% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 23.5% |
| Total | 29.4% | 20.6% | 5.9% | 2.9% | 29.4% | 5.9% | 11.8% | 100% | 100% |

Table 2 indicates that there is a link between the armed robbers educational level and work situation with committing an armed robbery offence. As can be seen from the table most armed robbers were either full time employees (29.4%) educated to advanced level (77.8%) and unemployed (29.4%) with ordinary level qualifications (100%).

Previous type of occupation of robbers

| Occupation type | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Sales (e.g. shop assistant) | 1 | 4.0% |
| Farming | 1 | 4.0% |
| Tradesman/labourer | 2 | 8.0% |
| Mining | 4 | 12.0% |
| Domestic worker | 2 | 8.0% |
| Armed forces | 12 | 48.0% |
| Transport and communication | 4 | 12.0% |

Table suggests that there is an association between previous type of occupation of robbers and committing of armed robbery crime. As can be seen from the table most armed robbers (48.0%) had background of working in armed forces, followed by those employed in the transport sector (12.0%) and mining sector (12.0%).

In line with quantitative findings, interviewees reported being former security services employees. They indicated that they were former employees of either Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) or Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) or prisons and correctional services. In support of the finding respondents had this to say:

‘I was an active member of the CID homicide ZRP department where I committed several robberies with fellow colleagues and other accomplices’ (armed robber 7)

‘I was a soldier in the ZNA and I started robberies soon after retiring joining accomplices I used to supply firearms whilst I was in active service’ (armed robber 10).

‘I am a retired soldier from ZNA. After retiring I would get firearms from senior police officers, pretending to be a gold buyer who needed protection. Initially I used to buy beer for them and return the weapon after the robbery. Later I gave him a huge sum of money (\$US1 500.00) and he told me to keep the pistol until further notice’ (armed robber 34)

Both qualitative and quantitative findings concur that previous type of occupation of robbers is related one committing armed robbery. Active and retired members of the security services sector were found to be the major perpetrators of armed robberies. The next section looks into factors that motivate robbers to rob specific areas and specific targets

Table 4: Motives for robbing specific places

| Factors | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Chance factors | 2 | 6.1% |
| Thought there is a lot of money | 9 | 23.7% |
| Information or tip from a friend or contact | 20 | 60.6% |

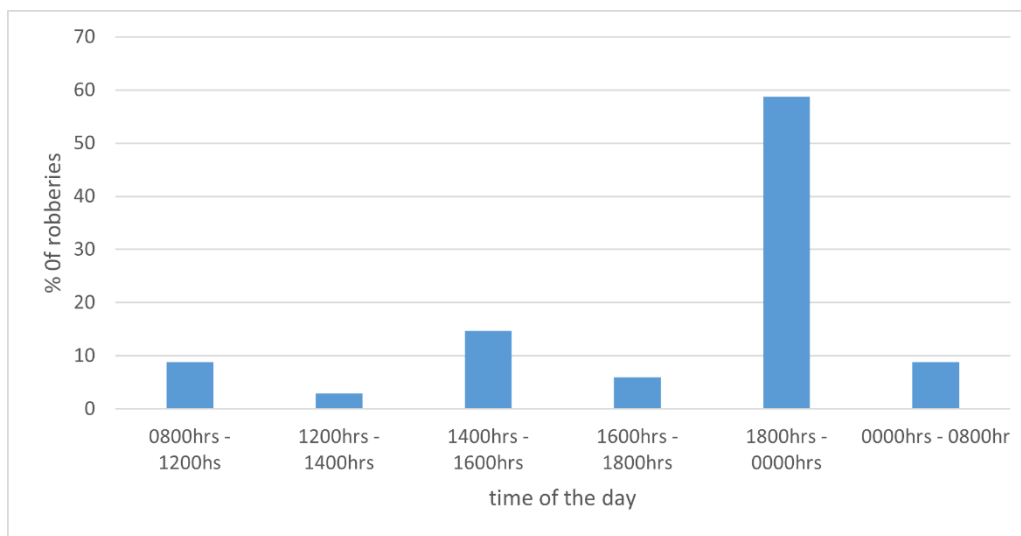
| | | |
|---|---|-------|
| Familiarity with the area in which the place is located | 5 | 15.2% |
| I knew the place | 5 | 15.2% |
| The place was easy to get-away from | 3 | 9.1% |
| Other | 6 | 18.2% |

The reasons for robbing specific places were asked and the results are indicated in Table 4 above. The majority of armed robbers (60.6%) revealed that they get a tip or information from a friend or contact, while a significant number (23.7%) targeted specific places where they believed had lots of money (23.7%). In support to the quantitative findings, information from closed open-ended questions indicated that armed robbers chose some specific places because they were informed by their friends or contact who have knowledge about those specific targeted places. The following verbal quotes demonstrate this finding:

‘It was an inside job, we contacted by our friend who works at the shop as a security guard. When we arrived at the shop that night, the security guard gave us his hand cuffs and we handcuffed him then we collected the money and goods as per the information given. He later on reported that the place was robbed’. (Armed robber 13).

Findings show that motivation to commit an armed robbery cannot be explained by a single factor. But most the robberies are rooted in tip-offs from people close to the victims.

Time of the day robbery committed



Time of the day robbery committed

The results on figure 4 indicated that the most popular time for robberies was between 1800hrs to 0000hrs (58.8%). The main reason for choosing that particular period was that they thought it would be easier to make a get-away at that time. The following verbal quotes demonstrate this finding: *‘During the night, it was easy to execute the job according to information we had at hand’* (armed robber 6). *‘Most people were sleeping and there were few police officers on duty so we avoid disturbance and identification’* (armed robber 18).

A significant number of robberies also took place between 1400hrs to 1600hrs (14.7 %). Interviewees suggested this time as most appropriate because most businesses or service trading institute will be closing and would have collected a lot of money. The following verbal quotes demonstrate this finding: *‘We acted according to the information we got from one of the staff member who works there, were enter the place using the alley which used by staff and we kept them hostage before they get out of the building. Doing the*

job was so easy' (armed robber 27).

Findings indicate that committing a robbery offence is associated with certain times of the day. Most armed robberies occurred at night when disturbances and chances of being identified are low.

Assessment of the area before robbery

| Assessment done before robbery | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Checked place from the outside | 17 | 51.5% |
| Entered the place and look around | 13 | 39.4% |
| Checked out what the security the place had | 20 | 60.6% |
| Find out distance from the nearest police station | 13 | 39.4% |
| Find out the amount of money in the place | 11 | 22.0% |
| Other | 2 | 5.8% |

Table above indicates that most common activity undertaken in order to 'case' the place robbed. Results indicate that robbers check out the security in place (60.6%), check the place from outside (51.5%), estimate the distance from the nearest police station (39.4%) and then enter the place and look around before committing an armed robbery. The findings suggest that robbers have procedures they follow before executing the armed robbery crime to ensure that they are not caught.

Types of weapons used during robbery

| Type of weapon | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Knife | 34 | 100.0% |
| Pistol | 26 | 76% |
| Rifle and shotgun | 15 | 44% |
| Machete | 6 | 17% |
| Catapult | 4 | 12% |
| Handcuffs | 3 | 9% |
| Knobkerrie | 2 | 6% |
| Spear | 1 | 3% |

As can be seen from the table knives were used in all cases of armed robberies, followed by pistols and rifles which were used in 76% and 44% of the armed robberies, respectively.

Where the firearm was obtained?

| How obtained | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Borrowed it | 10 | 47.6% |
| Bought it | 3 | 14.3% |
| Given to me for robbery | 6 | 28.6% |
| Other specify | 2 | 9.6% |

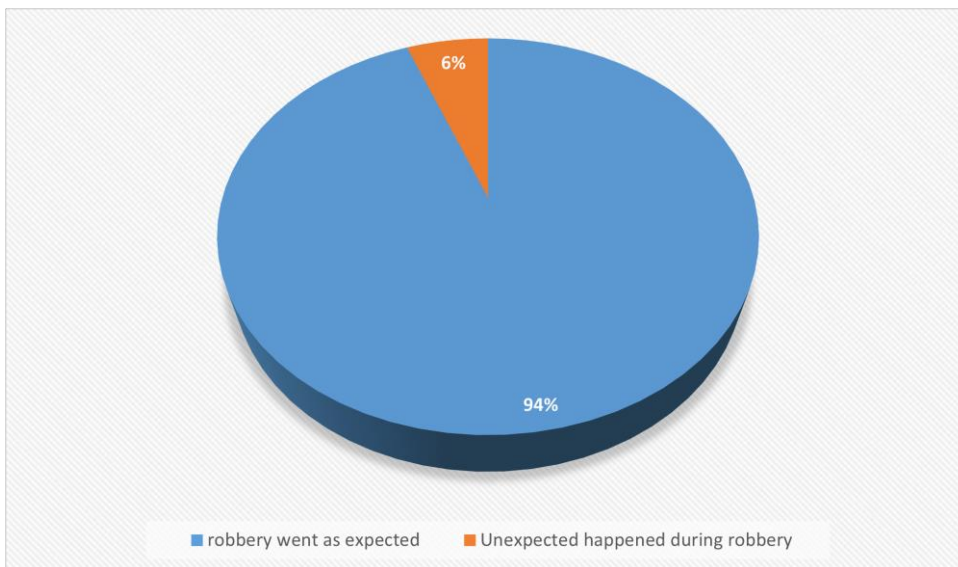
The results show that most of the weapons used during armed robbery were borrowed (47.6 %) or given for robbery (28.6%). In very few instances (14.3%) robbers were bought weapons. Interviewees reported that most firearms either borrowed or given to the robbers for robbery by law enforcement agents, like ZRP. It

emanated from interviews that most armed robberies are motivated by the armed robber's previous knowledge about firearms and accessibility to firearms. In addition, the socio-economic hardship drive those employed in the government's social services sector to earn a better living, since armed robbery is a brisk business compared their meagre earnings in formal employment. In support of this assertion one of the robbers said,

'I was employed in the CID homicide department, so I am well trained in the use of firearms, and also had access to firearms which we used with other armed robbers, I did this after noticing that armed robbery was more rewarding compared to my profession. This criminal behaviour become habitual and reinforced when I managed to buy 3 houses in the low density areas using proceeding from several robberies' (**armed robber 7**).

Findings suggest that armed robberies are committed by active and former members of the security services sector who have knowledge and access to firearms as they have connections within the security services sector even after leaving the force. The poor socio-economic conditions reinforced armed robbery criminal behaviour

How robbery took place



Nearly all respondents (94%) indicated that their robberies went as expected. The following extracts from open-ended questions highlight the above findings:

'Haa, it was like a move! At 2030hrs we entered inside the bottle store with few people inside and we ordered everyone inside to lie down, they comply. We then jumped inside the counter and took the money and get away with it'. (**Armed robber 34**).

'I stopped at a pump at service station, my accomplices jumped out and disarmed the security guard then we demanded all the money and get away'. (**Armed robber 11**)

'Takangosvika guard ndokutipa simbi tikamusunga nadzo. Akazosara omhan'ara kuti abirwa isu taenda. Meaning we arrived and the guard handed over handcuffs to us and we handcuffed him. He later on reported to the police that the place was robbed'. (**Armed robber 13**)

'We approached the gate and I jumped inside the durra wall and the victim saw me and he started to fire at me, immediately he was shot by colleagues. Then we managed to take the money and get-away'. (**Armed robber 21**)

'We had a conflict during sharing our diamond and we shot our leader and took all the diamond'. (Armed robber 14).

'We went to the mining house dressed like police officers and informed them that we are on duty. That is how we accessed the premise and we handcuffed them and demanded money and gold'. (Armed robber 31).

'We entered the place before closing through the back alley and we held them hostage, it was easy because they were using it to leave'. (Armed robber 27).

'We acted according to the information the accomplice who were working there' (armed robber 1).

'I approached the victim from behind and grabbed her bag then I stabbed her so that she the complies and I fled from the scene with the bag with money and cell phone' (armed robber 20)

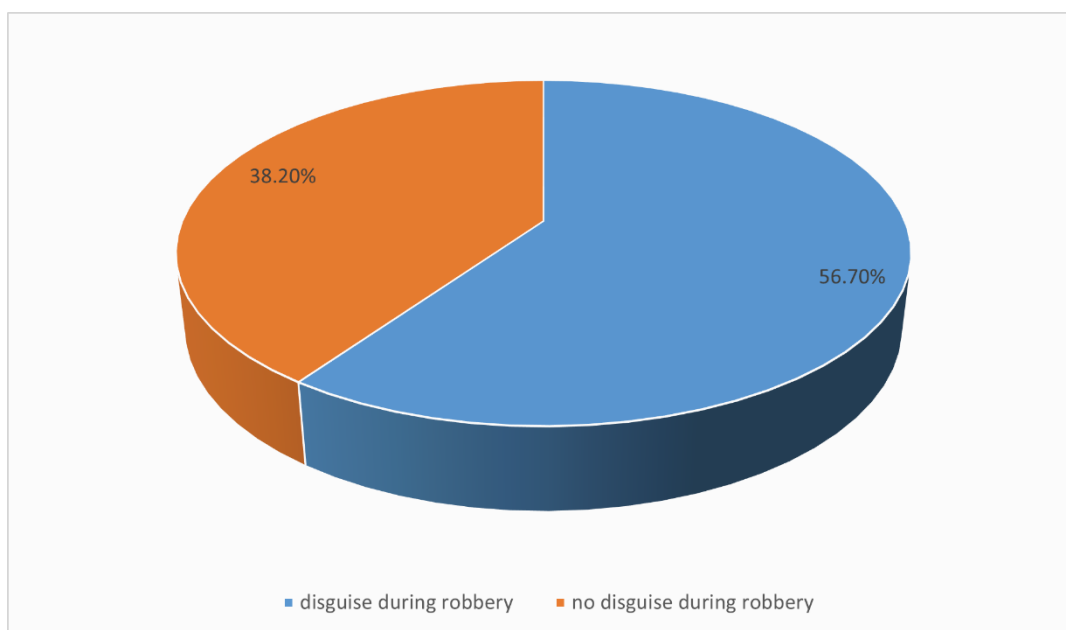
Only 6% of the armed robbery cases, where robbers said that they faced problems leading to their arrest. The information below highlights these findings:

'We cut the security fence and managed to get hold of one security guard and the other security guard blew a whistle and we run away but we were apprehended by the public' (armed robber 3).

'Our get-away car involved in road accident soon after Mashava and the police managed to arrest us. They took all the money for their personal gains and they came with a shotgun that we took at the mine as evidence in court'.

The findings show that 96% of robberies proceeded as planned, with only 6% encountering difficulties. Armed robbers who commit robberies alone also seem more likely than groups to have utilized a weapon during the robbery and to have wounded their victims.

Disguises during robbery



Disguise during robbery

Contrary to some of the other preparation tasks mentioned above, the findings of both closed-ended and open-ended questions showed that organizing disguises was quite common among robbers. Figure 12

indicate that the majority, 56.7% of robbers had organised disguises for the robbery and armed robbers with no disguise (38.2%). The following verbal quotes support this finding:

'For disguise we had to cover our face with face masks'. (Armed robber 3).

'The forms of disguise we used included: balaclava, sun glasses and artificial tattoos (armed robber 34).

'I was wearing a uniform of Zimbabwe republic police, holding my handcuffs I really acted like a police officer'. (Armed robber 31).

'I wore hat and scarf, gloves, overalls and mask for disguise'. (Armed robber1)

'We disguise by overcoats, masks, helmets, wigs, and artificial beards. (Armed robber 7).

Results from both open-ended and close-ended question reveals that most armed robbers (56.7) disguise during robbery and (38.2%) did not disguise during robbery. Armed robbers who did not organise disguises during robbery responded in general that there was no need for disguise since it was dark.

Likelihood of future robberies

| Factors | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Refused to answer | 18 | 52.9% |
| Depending on situation | 12 | 35.3% |
| Never rob again | 4 | 11.7% |

The robbers were asked if there are any circumstances under which they can carry another robbery. A large proportion (52.9%) of robbers refused to answer this question. Only 11.7% stated that they were no longer going to do any robbery. Then the other 35.3% states that it will depend on the situation.

These findings on socio-demographic characteristics of armed robbers implies that most armed robbers who participated in this study were black Zimbabwean people who are aged between 20 – 45 years. It emerged from the study that most armed robbers completed Ordinary and Advanced level of education with military background and those with no formal employment history. The current study further revealed that active and retired members of the security services sector were found to be the major perpetrators of armed robberies in Zimbabwe. The current study also established that robbers are highly motivated by need support themselves and their family. Findings of the current study shows that the main reasons for robbing specific target or places were that they get information of tips from contact or friend who works of who are close to people working in the target places robbed. The study further indicated that the criminal conduct associated with armed robbery is facilitated by the unlawful possession and use of firearm and aged weapons in the security sectors like the ZRP. It also emerged from the current study that most robberies occur between 1800hrs and 0000hrs and Thursdays has the highest frequency of robberies. In addition, most robbers travelled a distance of more than 20km from place of residence to place of robbery. The results indicate that actual armed robbery took more between 15minutes to 30minutes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The current study established that the all armed who participated in this study were male and black Zimbabweans. In relation to this study, Thobane (2014) had indicated that the race distribution of armed robbers is consistent with the general offender population. Findings shows that the main reasons for robbing specific target or places were that they get information of tips from contact or friend who works of who are

close to people working in the target places robbed. This is consistent with study previous study results in of research done in United Kingdom (UK) by Gill in (2001), participants reported that they sometimes received a tip from a staff member.

Also, findings from the current study indicate that the age and marital status of the respondents were associated with committing an armed robbery offence. Young male adults who were single and below the age of 30 years, and divorcees aged between 30 years and 45 years were identified as major perpetrators of armed robberies. In line with this findings, Smith and Louis (2010), indicated that 95 per cent of offenders who perpetrated armed robberies against banks and financial institutions in Australia were males between the ages of 20 and 29 years. Similarly, Carroll and Loch (1997) found that on average bank robbery offender, in California, is male and is 30 years of age or older. This finding is also in consistent with observation made in literature for instance in South Africa, Thobane (2014) asserts that as a person reaches their 50s and 60s, very few syndicates will allow them to join, unless they have a particular ability they sorely need, like cracking security codes.

In addition, this current finding is also in line with previous studies that crime in particular armed robbery is committed mostly by young males who are single and of low income class (Conklin 1972; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999). Similarly, Iwarimie-Jaja (1999) also found perpetrators of armed robberies to be single, male, less educated, and active members of society aged between 19-49 years. Pollack (1950) and Smart (1976) give similar findings that with regard to offenders' sexes, males have the highest frequency in criminal statistics. Therefore, there are similarity in sex, marital status and age range of armed robbers of this study and that of previous study done in other countries.

In addition, current research revealed a link between the armed robbers educational level and work situation with committing an armed robbery offence. The revelation that most armed robbers were either unemployed or not gainfully employed concurs with studies by Laryea (2008) found that economic deprivation has a positive correlation with residential instability and crime in general. Also consistent with study results, in the study of armed robbery in Ghana, Appiahene-Gyamfi (1998) found that armed robbers are likely to be unemployed. In the same vein, findings in the study of armed robbery in Australia show that armed robbers possess low skill and do not hold permanent jobs (Willis, 2006; Morris and O'Donnell, 1994). In support to the study previous study conducted in Australian, findings indicated that most convicted armed robbers possessed no employment skills and one-third had worked at some stage as low-skilled labourers (Kapardis, 1988). Also, the current study results that most armed robbers were Ordinary and Advanced level graduate is consistent with findings previously done in Nigeria that most respondents have school education at the secondary school (Pollak 1950; Conklin 1972; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987; Ekpeyong 1989; Olurode 1990; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994).

In the same vein, current study revealed that previous type of occupation of armed robbers were associated with committing armed robbery. For instance, active and retired members of the security services sector were identified as the major perpetrators of armed robberies. The current finding that armed forces were major perpetrators of armed robbery relate well with observation made in Nigeria and South Africa. According to a prior study conducted in Nigeria, Otu (2003), these types of accusations are widespread among Nigerians and investigative journalists who have, at various points, bravely or painstakingly, exposed covert networks of operations between armed robbery gangs and the Nigerian police, and in some cases, the military wing of the armed forces.

Current study findings indicate that committing a robbery offence is associated with certain times of the day. Most armed robberies occurred at night when disturbances and chances of being identified are low. Moreover, current findings suggest that most robberies occurred on Thursday followed by Fridays then weekends because robberies were getting more money which were kept without banking. This finding is in line with observation made by Weisel (2007) in Austria, where banks were predominantly at a risk of an

armed robbery on a Friday and the risk is even greater in winter because the sun sets earlier providing good cover during escape.

Moreover, results of this study revealed a relationship between number of armed robbers and planning. Most of the armed robberies were done by individual who rob alone or as a group in cases were robbers willing plan to commit the crime as a group. The study finding is similar to Cohen and Felson (1979) who noted that routine activities is associated with criminal activities of the robbers, for instance most participants reported that they were influenced to committee robbery by the group they associated with who committee robberies and they assisted willingly. Maree (2008) explains that bank robbers usually operate in a group or gang and within this group each member has a role, namely: cash collector, the controller, the driver, the spotter and other associates. Classical Criminology put forward that people have free will to choose criminal or conventional behaviours and that crime can be controlled only by the fear of criminal sanctions (Siegel, 2005). So the most of the participants assisted willingly in robbery after cost and benefit analysis. Siegel, (2005) observed that the offender is completely rational when making the decision to commit a crime.

The current study results of the current study also indicated that knives were used in all cases of armed robberies and most of the robbery were committed using pistols and rifles. The previous studies are in consistent to the current study, for instance, Rossouw (2004) postulates that in South Africa, robbers select the type of weapons which are most suited to their role in the robbery. For instance, in a CIT heist, the spotter would need to carry an AK-47, whilst the robber who would enter the bank to steal the money would use a high-velocity 9mm pistol like a Tokarev or Makarov. Moreover, Gabor et al. (1987) found that many armed robberies use pistols, and it is likely that some type of firearm is essential in at least certain types of robbery.

In the current study findings, results indicate that most of the firearms were brought or borrowed from servicing and retired Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) officers and few were smuggled from countries like South Africa and Mozambique. Findings are in line with Nugent et al (1989) who found that a significant number of firearms used in armed robberies in Australia were either borrowed or bought from members of the security services for the purposes of committing an armed robber offence. In the same vein, South African research conducted by Rossouw (2004), revealed that military members, especially Mozambicans and former UmKhonthon weSizwe (MK) members, play a very important role in the supply of high calibre weapons to the armed robbers. Furthermore, the robbers admitted that they bought their guns from corrupt SAPS officers as well as at township hostels, Sunnyside (Pretoria), Hillbrow (Johannesburg), and Sunnyside (Pretoria). Otu (2003) views that a significant number of weapons that are obtained from members of the armed forces is worrying, and this must be seen as sufficiently having serious policy implications. In addition, Otu (2003) reported that the public generally describes this latter segment of the armed forces—police as collaborators to the spate of brutal armed robbery in modern Nigeria.

Results of current study also indicate that most armed robbers disguise during robbery, hence the reasons why most armed robberies were committed in the evening and at night, and most of them wore masks. In sync with findings, Borzycki (2006) suggested that wearing a disguise to hide one's identity is one of the elements which indicate that a gang planned their attack. Similarly, Nugent et al (1989) noted that the most popular form of disguise is to cover the head with a balaclava and there are other types of disguises such as sunglasses, head gear such as a hat or beanie, gloves, overalls, overcoats, wigs and false beards or moustaches. Borzycki (2006) further classifies disguises into "soft" (normal clothing such as a scarf, cap or sunglasses) or "hard" (which needs to be prearranged before the attack, such as balaclava, wig or moustache).

Proposed armed robbery profiling model

To facilitate the implementation of recommendations given, an armed robbery profiling model is proposed

below. This model is grounded in routine activity theory, rational choice theory, theories of aggression, reviewed literature on the topic and findings of the study. The proposed armed robbery model has the following indicators: information from close people, military background, unemployment, and victim or target vulnerability.

The armed robbers get information from close contacts such as relatives, friends and employees of the victim/target before they commit the armed robbery crime. Armed robbers are motivated several factors such as employment in security services, no formal employment history, access to firearms, poverty, Distance to the target from place of residence, attained level of education, presence of darkness and/or disguises like masks and male aged between 20 – 45 years.



Proposed armed robbery profiling model

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to profile armed robbers who were detained in Zimbabwean prisons. Taking into account the aforementioned findings from the participants’ social and demographic profiles. It may be said that a “typical” image of a robber is a black male adult born in Zimbabwe who is between the ages of 20 and 45, has an ordinary or advanced level of education, has either had military training or is unemployed and has a problematical marital situation.

In addition, the current study indicated that specific place of robbery mentioned with most frequently was

homes followed by supermarkets and then persons in the street. Findings also shows that the main reasons for robbing specific target or places were that they get information of tips from contact or friend who works of who are close to people working in the target places robbed. In addition, current study indicates that committing a robbery offence is associated with certain day of week and time of the day. For example, it was found that most robberies occur on Thursday and Fridays between 1800hr and 0000hrs.

Also, the current study indicates that the most motivation for armed robbery was to obtain money to support family or self. Also those who robes in a group state that they were influenced by group they hung around with who involved in these offences. What was emphasized by most respondents in this study was the fact that weapons are among the most important resources needed to commit a successful robbery. Results of the current study indicate that some firearms used in of the robberies were modified prior to the robbery. The study therefore recommends that there is need for close monitoring of movements of firearms in the security sectors. Also establishing a behavioural analysis unit of specialist in who are well trained in criminal investigation and profiling offenders.

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