

Abstract

There exists substantial evidence that a likely offender's decision making on places to offend depends on his or her assessment of the place. The assessment can be in terms of physical facilities, social features or guardianship measures that exist in such a neighborhood. Their existence in a geographical space makes it possible for a probable offender either to commit or not commit crime in such a place. In Kenya, few studies have been done on the influence of facilities, clusters, social and physical characteristics on crime commission. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate neighborhood characteristics and their influence on crime commission in Kiambu County. Thika West Sub-county in Kiambu County was purposively sampled because Kiambu County is ranked highest in crime prevalence for the year 2015 and 2016 in the country and ranked second for the year 2017 and 2018. For the four consecutive years, Thika West Sub-county accounted for the highest crime rates reported in Kiambu County. Additionally, the Sub-county police report for the year 2018 indicates that a few places accounted for the most crimes in Thika West Sub-county. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was guided by rational choice theory and social disorganization theory. The target population was 245,820 subjects comprising of the business owners, security agents and area residents within the three locations of Thika West Sub-county. The study utilized a sample size of 400 respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents that were included in the study sample. Three chiefs from the three locations and Deputy County Commander (DCC) were purposively included in the study sample as security agents. The instrument of collecting data was the questionnaire which was pilot-tested in Ruiru Sub-county. The instruments' reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. The correlation coefficient for physical facilities' reliability was 0.741, for guardianship was 0.743 and 0.720 for social interactions. Methods of analyzing data used for descriptive were frequencies and percentages. The inferential statistics were analyzed using categorical regression and linear regression analysis. The analysis was facilitated by the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. It was found that there exists a positive significant relationship between physical facilities existing in the neighborhoods and crime commission. The study revealed that there exists a negative significant relationship between guardianship of a place and crime commission. It was concluded that there exists a negative significant relationship between social interactions of people and crime commission. The government as the manager in security sector benefits from the findings of this study as it is enlightened on various crime generators and attractors. This helps in resource allocations to the security sector in the fight against crime. Thus the National Security Council would be able to improve the existing policies in security sector. The findings of the study are beneficial to urban planners in planning for urban built environment. The findings of this study are valuable to researchers and scholars, as they form the basis of further research and assist in academic purposes by providing general knowledge in the area of crime commission.