

EVALUATION OF CRIME SCENE CASES: A CASE OF SAMSUN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Abstract

Crime scene investigation teams investigate different types of criminal cases and collected evidences in relation to further examination. The collected evidences are vital for the elucidation of cases. Regarding from these aspects, in this study, it is aimed at evaluating the cases investigated by Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Teams working at the Crime Scene Investigation and Identification Division of Samsun Police Department in 2007 and 2008. In categorizing the cases, the statistical category used by the Crime Scene Investigation and Identification Division Office, were taken on the basis of type, frequency, division and year. Analysis of crime cases were taken from the central and they were examined separately. There were two crime scene investigation teams working 24/7 using 12/36 (working 12 hrs. / 36 hrs. off-duty) working system in the province. The number of cases investigated by the team was 3218 in 2007, and 2956 in 2008. However, the most investigated cases in 2007 were shoplifting (689 cases), while “other cases” as filed (500 cases) took place in 2008. The least investigated cases, however, were suicides (9 cases) in 2007, and robberies and frauds (2 cases) in 2008.

Keywords: Forensic, crime scene investigation, police, homicide, theft

Introduction

The significance of crime scene investigation (CSI) was first recognized by Edmund Locard in 1910 when he introduced his famous interchange theory (Weston, 2004). Locard argued that no matter how careful a criminal is when committing a crime, it is almost impossible not to leave a trace behind at the crime scene. Therefore, this theory has introduced a broad perspective on a comprehensive look at crime scene investigations (Weston, 2004).

Criminal investigations usually start by reporting an unlawful activity, which is done often through a telephone call by a victim or witness of a crime to a law enforcement agency. Upon receiving this information,

patrol officers are dispatched to the reported crime scene. They gather information about the nature of the crime (if any) and report their findings to their respective units. If patrol officers think that further investigation is needed, they request detectives from special investigation units to be sent to the crime scene. Detectives work on the crime scene and determine the kind of further investigation such as the crime scene investigation (Newton, 2008). Crime can be committed anywhere i.e. indoors, outdoors, in vehicles, in the sea, etc. (Fletcher, 2006). However, the duties and responsibilities of a CSI team includes, but not limited to photography or video recording of crime scene, victims, and property. They also search and recover physical evidence, detection and recovery of fingerprints and palmprints, packaging and storage of physical evidence, preparation of reports, and presentation of evidences in court (Pepper, 2005; Önder, 2006).

Crime-scene investigation is an essential element of a whole criminal investigation (Lee et al., 2004). Before commencing any crime scene investigation, it is important to have all the available information about what kind of crime was committed. Essentially, first phase in the investigative process is to determine the type of crime. A crime scene investigator basically tries to answer six sigma questions on the crime scene: Who? What? When? How? Where? Why? (Horswell, 2004). However, the answers to those questions are crucial in solving a crime. It is the only way to connect the dots among the scene, and the victim and the suspect (Gardner, 2005).

Crime recording and categorizing for collecting and storing in organizational database systems enable to investigating cases in a smart way. Further, Crime Statistics can be used as managerial tool for police teams and managers. Hot spots, workload, crime types and related prevention strategies, investigation methods, success and failures of investigation teams are identified more easily.

Methodology of Data Collection and Analysis

This study have been prepared to illustrate that whether there is difference among crime types, frequency of those crimes in relation to their territorial areas. Crime statistics were evaluated between 2007 and 2008 recorded by CSI Teams of Samsun Police Department.

This study used to meta-data analysis strategy. Samsun Police Department collects crime data based on reported files on a daily basis. Division of Crime Scene Investigation files all crimes and archives them in its digital database system. Data entry to the system is processed through manually filed cases. System allows not only to retrieve and compare data, but also enables to portray statistics. As a gate keeper, a permission letter is submitted to Directorate of Department to access data without endangering personal and organizational confidentiality and sensitive issues.

After approval, crime data was retrieved from the database. This meta-data was formatted for further analysis in terms of statistical presentation in the next section. Statistics were presented by type, year, and borough and station category.

Presentation of Data Analysis

The crime scene investigation teams investigated a total of 3218 cases in 2007. Looking at the details of these cases, they investigated 689 shoplifting cases, 736 house theft cases, 535 car theft/thefts from car cases, 47 theft from public building cases, 12 homicide cases, 10 robbery and fraud cases, 27 suspicious death cases, 9 suicide cases, 101 wounding cases, 88 shoot/bullet hits cases, 128 shooting in the air cases, 78 fire and arson cases, 222 property damage cases, and 536 other crime cases. More detailed presentation of crime figures are shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Crime scene investigation statistics in 2007

CSI Statistics in 2007							
Types of Crime	District and Station						
	Atakum	İlkadim				Canik	General Total
	Atakum	Gazi	İlkadim	Unkapanı	İlyasköy	Canik	
Shoplifting	121	144	154	42	83	145	689
Theft from house	239	119	80	65	136	97	736
Car theft/theft from car	108	88	52	63	120	104	535
Theft from official agency	10	8	4	5	13	7	47
Homicide	2	2	0	3	4	1	12
Robbery/fraud	2	5	1	0	1	1	10
Suspicious death	10	3	3	2	2	7	27
Suicide	2	2	0	1	1	3	9
Wounding	12	28	11	15	21	14	101
Shooting/bullet hit sth.	10	29	12	10	23	4	88
Shooting in the air	17	34	16	16	25	20	128
Fire and arson	8	23	17	10	11	9	78
Damaging property	22	69	32	30	42	27	222
Other crimes	99	83	65	85	109	95	536
Total	662	637	447	347	591	534	3218
District Total	662	2022				534	

In 2008, a total of 2956 cases were investigated. Looking at the details of these cases, they investigated 484 shoplifting cases, 725 theft from house cases, 498 car theft/theft from car cases, 37 theft from public building

cases, 10 homicide cases, 2 robbery and fraud cases, 29 suspicious death cases, 13 suicide cases, 94 wounding cases, 71 shoot/bullet hit cases, 111 shooting in the air cases, 78 fire and arson cases, 304 property damage cases, and 500 other crime cases (Table 2).

Table 2. Crime scene investigation statistics in 2008

CSI Statistics in 2008							
Types of Crime	District and Station						
	Atakum	İlkadım				Canik	General total
	Atakum	Gazi	İlkadım	Unkapam	İlyasköy	Canik	
Shoplifting	78	110	63	43	82	108	484
Theft from house	225	104	63	93	124	116	725
Car theft/theft from car	121	56	49	62	100	110	498
Theft from public building	8	6	3	1	12	7	37
Homicide	2	3	0	0	2	3	10
Robbery/fraud	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Suspicious death	4	3	5	6	6	5	29
Suicide	5	1	0	4	1	2	13
Wounding	14	22	12	14	19	13	94
Shooting/bullet hit sth.	11	11	11	13	20	5	71
Shooting in the air	22	21	10	16	22	20	111
Fire and arson	18	22	10	3	11	14	78
Damaging property	39	97	40	38	51	39	304
Other crimes	82	83	38	125	66	106	500
Total	629	539	305	418	516	549	2956
District Total	629	1778				549	

When the cases were examined in the borough and police station category in 2007, a total of 662 cases were investigated in Atakum Borough Police Division. Since there is only one police station (Atakum Police Station) in this borough, all the cases have been investigated in this police station district. While most of the cases were theft from houses with 239 incidents in 2007 in this district, homicides, robberies, frauds and suicides took place in at least 2 cases. In 2008, a total of 629 cases were investigated in this borough. While the most investigated cases were again theft from houses with 225 incidents, the least investigated cases were the homicide incidents with 2 cases. Interestingly, robbery and fraud have never occurred.

In İlkadim Borough Police Division, a total of 2022 incidents were investigated in 2007. In addition, 637 of these cases were investigated at Gazi Police Station, 447 of them at İlkadım Police Station, 347 of them at Unkapanı Police Station, and 591 of them were investigated at the İlyasköy Police Station. While the most investigated cases were shoplifting with 423 incidents, the least investigated cases were the robberies and frauds with 4 incidents. In 2008, a total of 1778 cases were investigated in this borough, 539 of these cases were investigated at Gazi Police Station, and 305 of them at İlkadım Police Station, 418 of them at Unkapanı Police Station, and 516 of them were investigated at İlyasköy Police Station. While the most investigated cases were theft from houses with 384 incidents, the least investigated cases were robbery and fraud with 1 incident.

In Canik Borough Police Division, a total of 534 incidents were investigated in 2007. All events in the only police station in this borough have been examined in the police station (Canik Police Station). Since there is only one police station in this borough, all the cases have been investigated in this police station's district.

While the most investigated cases were shoplifting with 145 incidents in 2007, the least investigated cases were homicide, robbery and fraud with 1 incident. In 2008, a total of 549 incidents were investigated in this borough. While the most investigated cases were theft from houses with 116 incidents, the least investigated cases were robbery and fraud with 1 incident. Considering the decreasing numbers of the investigated incidents per team, there were 1609 cases per team in 2007. When we divide the number of these events into three (3) groups according to the working system, we see that one group has examined about 536 cases in a year. There were 985 cases per team in 2008. However, approximately 328 cases were investigated by each of the three (3) groups of this team.

Discussion

When we look at the crime scenes which were investigated by CSI teams in 2007 and 2008, it has been found that an extra 262 cases were investigated in 2007 compared to 2008. While number of the cases investigated in all categories decreased in 2008, the cases of suspicious deaths, suicides and property damaging increased. However, fire and arson cases have remained constant. At the borough division level, analysis of the investigated cases show that, the most incidents occurred in the İlkadım Borough Police Department in 2007 and 2008. İlkadım Borough Division has the highest number of police stations also had the highest incident number. These high figures are related to population and people mobility in terms of city center. The findings of the analysis of police stations show that most cases were investigated at Gazi Police Station with 637 incidents in

2007; also, 629 cases were investigated at İlkadim Police Department in 2008 respectively. In 2007, the least number of cases were investigated in Unkapanı Area with 347 incidents, while in 2008, 305 incidents were investigated at İlkadim district. When comparatively analyzed the number of incidents per team and group, it has been found 1,46 incidents per group per day in 2007. Thus, this number decreases to 0,89 in 2008. Considering that life bustle occurs during the daytime, it is normally considered that this distribution will not be even, and daytime groups will investigate more cases. With these considerations, in particular, it should be noted that the details of the incidents which are not present in the "other crimes" category of the crime categories of this study were unknown. However, the details of this category which took the third place by 536 incidents in 2007 and 500 incidents in 2008 should have been stated.

Conclusion

The evaluation of crimes investigated by CSI Teams of Samsun Police Department has not been studied from an academic perspective. The findings and results of the study may be guide to practitioner why crime-event records should be recorded much more in detail as much as possible. Statistical analysis of crimes enables CSI practitioners and police professionals to see trends in terms of decrease or increase of crime and related types based on territorial differences. Over the years, macro view of crime and criminal statistics helps to practitioners improve prevention, investigation methods as much as review daily practices. For managers, crime recording and analysis the trends and terms of showing for much of which events are processed, which crime are highest or lowest in particular area, changing of statistics in two years periods. Also, according to event type and region, this study can help managers of team planning to deploy crime scenes. Besides long term data will need to be for long term follow up and planning of crime scene investigation methods.

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