Victimization, Fear of Crime, and Perception of Risk in the Workplace: Testing Rival Theories with a Sample of Greek and Greek-Cypriot Journalists

A DISSERTATION

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by

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Abstract

The study at hand assessed the relative importance of situational and dispositional factors in predicting victimization, perceived risk, and fear of crime at work as a first step to developing practices and procedures that minimize employees’ experiences of workplace victimization. The theoretical approach to the matter in question took into consideration the situational tenets of lifestyle/routine activity theory and the individual tenets of negative affectivity and low self-control theories. The domain-specific empirical assessment was based on data from a survey administered to a representative sample of professional journalists working in two southern European countries: Greece and Cyprus. The multivariate statistical techniques of correspondence analysis, multiple regression, and logistic regression were employed for the analysis of the data.

The results indicated a relatively high prevalence of physical victimization among professional journalists, an exceptionally high prevalence of psychological victimization and an average prevalence of property victimization. Male journalists were found to be significantly more likely to be victims of both physical violence and property victimization. Older journalists were found to suffer significantly more property offenses and younger journalists significantly more psychological abuse. Compared to married journalists, single ones were found to be victimized significantly more by psychological abuse. Furthermore, it was found that journalists have low-to-moderate levels of perceived risk and relatively low levels of fear of crime. The perception of risk among journalists was invariant across sociodemographic characteristics. However, female journalists and younger respondents expressed higher levels of fear of being
verbally threatened. Male journalists and those less educated expressed higher levels of fear of being physically attacked. Moreover, the gender-age categories who suffered more from physical victimization were also the ones who had higher levels of fear of physical victimization.

The results also clarified the role of victimization experiences on the perception of risk and fear of crime. Although previous research found that victimization has positive effects on both the perception of risk and fear of crime, the results of this study showed that those associations are to a large extent spurious, accounted for by the situational characteristics of the occupation and the dispositional characteristics of employees. Finally, the results extended previous research by showing that the likelihood of victimization, perceived risk, and fear of crime at work were determined not only by the situational characteristics of the task performed but also by the dispositional characteristics of the person in the occupational role. Negative affectivity and the situational tenets of lifestyle/routine activity theory were consistently related to the likelihood of victimization, perceived risk, and fear of crime at work. Low self-control was significantly related only to the perception of risk of criminal victimization.

The findings of this study indicate a number of attributes of the journalistic occupation that could be modified to reduce the risk of criminal victimization, perceived risk, and fear of crime. They also suggest that journalists can reduce their chances of being victimized by taking into consideration the way in which their behaviors and attitudes enhance their vulnerability to victimization.
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Biographical Sketch

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