

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA



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**PATTERNS OF HOMICIDE AND ROBBERY
IN *UTUSAN MALAYSIA***

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Bachelor of
Science in Forensic Science**

NIK AZMAH BINTI NIK RAMLY

**School of Health Sciences
Universiti Sains Malaysia
Health Campus
16150 Kubang Kerian, Kelantan
Malaysia**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Patterns of Homicide and Robbery in Utusan Malaysia**” is the bonafide record of research work done by Miss Nik Azmah binti Nik Ramly, Matric Number: 81537, during the period of December 2007 until April 2008 under my supervision. This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science. All the achievement and data from this research are hereby declared as the property of University Science Malaysia (USM).



Research Supervisor:

Dr. Geshina Ayu Mat Saat

Lecturer of Forensic Sciences

School of Health Sciences

University Science Malaysia (USM)

Date: 15 April 2008

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ABSTRACT

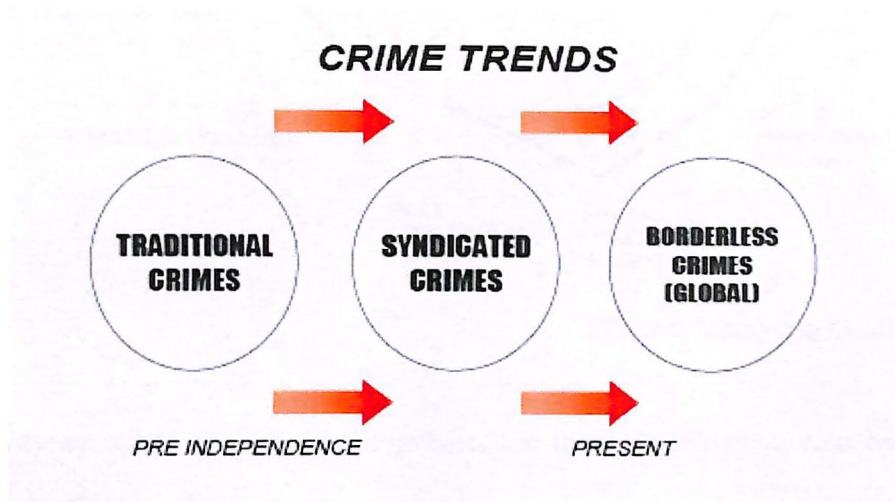
This study sought to establish the patterns of homicide and robbery in Malaysia as reported in the Malay newspaper *Utusan Malaysia*. This study will help to identify the patterns of frequency for both violent crimes according to year, state, perpetrator demographics, and victim demographics. All necessary data was obtained and analyzed from *Utusan Malaysia* between the years 2004 and 2006. The results of this analysis was compared to PDRM Crime Index. Archival analysis was used in this study. The Kruskal-Wallis Test for K Independent Samples was used to test hypotheses. There were 153 homicide cases and 74 robbery cases. The highest cases of homicide were reported in 2004 (59 cases of all cases) followed by 51 cases in 2006 and 43 cases in 2005. The most prevalent of robbery occurred in 2006 (47 cases of all cases). This was followed with 14 cases in 2004 and 13 cases in 2005. The results showed homicide and robbery victims in Malaysia were male, 'Malay' and Malaysian. The majority of homicide victims in Malaysia belonged to the age 'above 45 years old' whereas the age for robbery victims were '35.1 to 45 years old'. From the findings, male and aged '18.1 to 35 years old' were the most prevalent homicide and robbery perpetrators. The homicide and robbery in Malaysia mostly involved one victim. The highest ethnicity of murderers in Malaysia were 'Malay' after 'not stated' ethnicity. Chinese and foreigners were the most prevalent robbers in Malaysia. The comparison between *Utusan Malaysia* and PDRM Crime Index showed that homicide was more common as reported in *Utusan Malaysia* compared to robbery but the PDRM Crime Index showed robbery was more prevalent in Malaysia compared to homicide.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The crime rate in Malaysia has been increasing daily. The present development of the crime pattern had been changing from before independence (Amar, 2005). Present crimes like homicide and robbery is getting more complex and are sometimes hard to detect. According to figure 1.1, crime has developed from its humble beginning like simple wayside robbery to syndicated crimes and now the more complex borderless crimes like white collar crime. Presently, the white collar crime has become borderless with its transactions taking place thousands of miles away and causing jurisdiction problems.

Figure 1.1: Developments of Crime trends in Malaysia

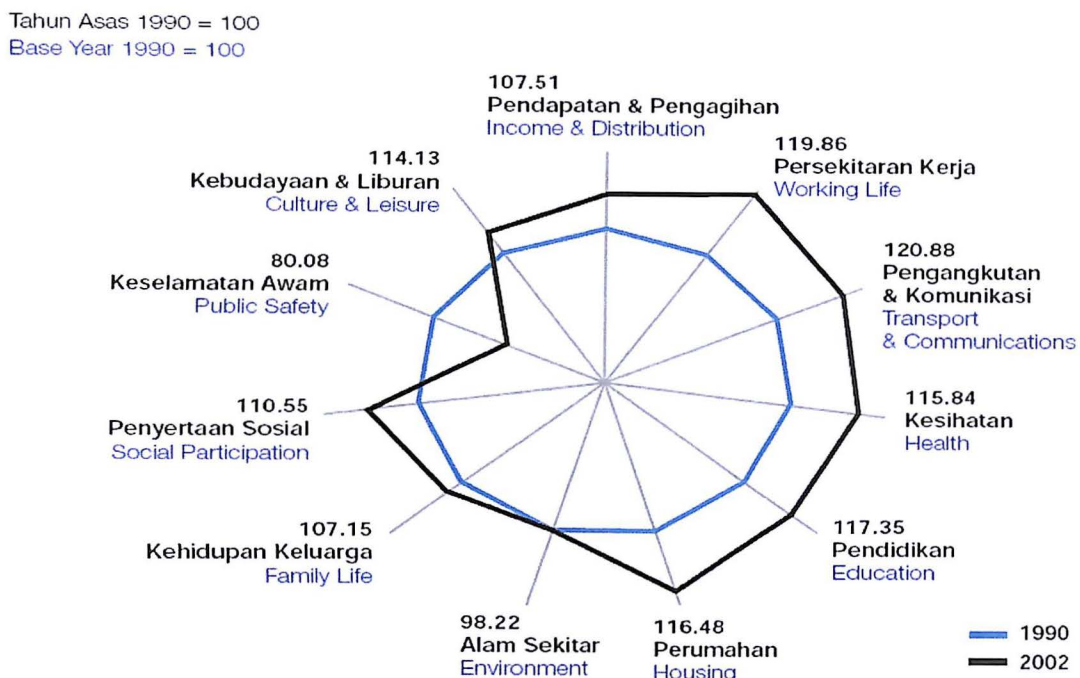


(Source: Amar, 2005)

This rise in the crime rate in Malaysia has given a bad impact to the public. It is seen to be increasing in direct relation as our country's economy and intra structure developments. The 2004 report on Malaysia Quality of Life index showed that there had been an increase in all

aspects of Malaysian quality of life except in public safety and environment. For example in 2002, the safety index decreased to 80.08 compared to the previous decade (Figure 1.2). This showed that the increase of crimes in Malaysia decreased the public safety and environment indices.

Figure 1.2: Indices of Components, 1990 and 2000

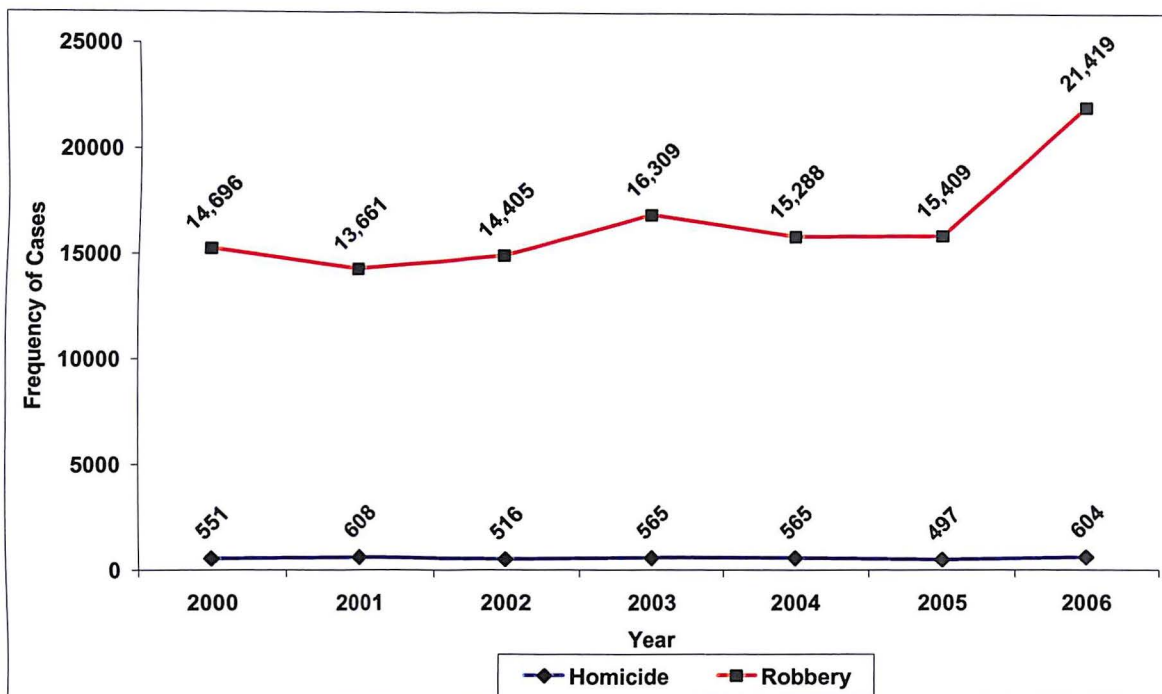


(Source: Malaysian Quality of Life 2004)

Other than having a bad impact on the public, the increase of crime also become a major public health problem. This can be seen in violent crime cases such as homicide that requires the involvement of coroner’s assistant as well as other health practitioners. Homicide and robbery are among the cases that attract local media and are frequently featured in major newspapers. The statistics for homicide and robbery in Malaysia can be obtained from the PDRM Crime Index.

Figure 1.3 shows the pattern of homicide and robbery from the years 2000 to 2006 in Malaysia. Based on this figure, the total number of homicide and robbery cases in Malaysia is not consistent. Nevertheless, both crimes increased in 2006 compared to 2000. Homicide cases increased from 551 cases in 2000 to 604 cases in 2006 whereas robbery cases increased from 14,696 cases in 2000 to 21,419 cases in 2006.

Figure 1.3: Trend Analysis of Homicide and Robbery in Malaysia According to Year



(Source: PDRM Crime Index, 2007)

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

This study on homicide and robbery cases were carried out due to public's and media's interest in these cases. News about these crimes are common and usually made as the headline in major newspapers. Furthermore in Malaysia, the study on these crime pattern has never been done.

This study also aims to relate the portrayal of crime by media that influences public's perceptions towards crime with the real crime statistics. Public's perception towards crime is formed through media exposure such as from the television, film, video and the internet (Dowler et al., 2006). In Malaysia, from 1980 to 2004, violent crime which includes homicide and robbery, covered only 10% of all crimes. The other 90% of crimes recorded during the same period was crime of property (Amar, 2005). According to Amar, robbery and homicide constituted 9.8% and 0.4% respectively from the total percentage in the 2004 crime index. However, the publicity generated by the media concerning homicide and robbery were higher compared to car theft which had the highest frequency in the crime index (Amar, 2005).

Both Fleming (1983) and Dowler (2004) believed that crime is the central news to the society in Canada (Dowler et al., 2006). News published by the media was selective and most of it focused on violent cases. Thus it creates violent cases as a product to build up fears among the audience and readers. Media's focus on homicide and robbery cases in Malaysia has made both crimes seem to be statistically higher compared to the actual crime index.

It is hoped that this current research would be able help the public to see the real situation of homicide and robbery cases in Malaysia. The public should be able to differentiate between the real situations in Malaysia and the news as reported by the media. Through this evaluation, the public can rate the crime and safety level themselves.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This part describes the research objectives in this study. There is one general objective, and four specific objectives that were concerned with homicide and robbery crime patterns in

Malaysia. All objectives were related to how a local newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia* portrayed crime.

General Objective

To investigate the patterns of homicide and robbery in Malaysia as reported in a Malay newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are objectives derived from the general objective. These objectives were specifically used to form the hypothesis for this study. The specific objectives were:

1. To identify the patterns of homicide.
 - The patterns investigated were based on year, state, perpetrator demographics, and victim demographics. The time frame of these violent crimes was between 2004 and 2006.

2. To identify the patterns of robbery.
 - The patterns that will be investigated are based on year, state, perpetrator demographics, and victim demographics. The time frame of these violent crimes is between 2004 and 2006.

3. Compare the frequency of newspaper reports and official police statistics on homicide cases.
 - This was to investigate whether there were any differences between statistics of homicide with what is portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia*.

4. Compare the frequency of newspaper reports and official police statistics on robbery cases.
 - This was to investigate whether there were any differences between statistics of robbery with what is portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia*.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis is a prediction of an answer from a certain question. A hypothesis is also considered as a temporary suggestion on the relationship between two modifiers through deduction (Ahmad, 2005). The hypotheses for this particular study have been form based on the specific objectives stated in 1.3.1.

$H1_0$ = There is no difference between victims' and perpetrators' demographics with homicide cases.

$H1_1$ = There is a difference between victims' and perpetrators' demographics with homicide cases.

H2₀ = There is no difference between victims' and perpetrators' demographics with robbery cases.

H2₁ = There is a difference between victims' and perpetrators' demographics with robbery cases.

H3₀ = There is no difference between statistics of homicide in PDRM Crime Index with what is portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia*.

H3₁ = There is a difference between statistics of homicide in PDRM Crime Index with what is portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia*.

H4₀ = There is no difference between statistics of robbery in PDRM Crime Index with what is portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia*.

H4₁ = There is a difference between statistics of robbery in PDRM Crime Index with what is portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia*.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The key terms used in this study were as follows: pattern, homicide, robbery, mass media and crime index. This section will attempt to define the terms used in this study. This is in order to provide more understanding to readers about these terms of references.

1.5.1 Pattern

Pattern is a regular sequence of actions or events (Oxford English Minidictionary, 2004).

Pattern can also be defined as an example, model or patron (Kamus Dewan, 2005).

Specifically for this study, pattern will refer to the homicide and robbery cases in Malaysia reported in *Utusan Malaysia*.

1.5.2 Culpable Homicide and Murder

Homicide is to end a life, erase, get rid of (something) as to eliminate or terminate (Kamus Dewan, 2005). According to the United States Code (2006), homicide includes murder and manslaughter. Murder is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought whereas manslaughter is the unlawful killing of a human being without malice. There are two kinds of manslaughter:

- a) Voluntary-Upon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion.

- b) Involuntary-In the commission of an unlawful act not amounting to a felony, or in the commission in an unlawful manner, or without due caution and circumspection, of a lawful act which might produce death.

Murder and non negligent manslaughter, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, is the willful (non negligent) killing of one human being by another (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2007).

According to the Malaysia Penal Code (Act 574), section 299, whoever causes death by doing an act with the intention of causing death, or with the intention of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that he is likely by such act to cause death, commits the offence of culpable homicide. Section 300 in 574 Acts declared that, except in the cases hereinafter excepted, culpable homicide is murder:

- a) If the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death;
- b) If it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused;
- c) If it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person, and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death; or
- d) If the person committing the acts knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability cause death, or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death, or such injury as aforesaid.

1.5.3 Robbery and Gang-robbery

The UCR program defines robbery as the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear another (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2007). According to Appiahene- Gyamfi (1998), robbery is stealing of property by way of threatening, physical violence or extortion.

Robbery can be classified as armed or unarmed (Appiahene- Gyamfi, 1998). Armed robbery is usually attempted by persons who are skilled in handling various types of firearms. Gabor et al. (1987) stated that there are six types of robbery. These are gang bank robbery, individual

bank robbery, armed commercial gang robbery, individual armed commercial robbery, convenient store and service station robbery, and robbery of individuals (muggings).

In Malaysia, Penal Code (Act 574), section 390 stated that:

- 1) In all robbery there is either theft or extortion.
- 2) Theft is “robbery”, if, in order to commit theft, or in committing the theft, or in carrying away or attempting to carry away property obtained by the theft, the offender, for that end, voluntarily causes or attempts to cause to any person death, or hurt, or wrongful restraint, or fear of instant death or of instant hurt, or of instant wrongful restraint.
- 3) Extortion is “robbery”, if the offender, at the time of committing the extortion, is in the presence of the person put in fear and commits the extortion by putting that person in fear of instant death, of instant hurt, or of instant wrongful restraint to that person or to some other person, and, by so putting in fear, induces the person so put in fear then and there to deliver up the thing extorted.

Penal Code (Act 574), section 391 also declared that when five or more persons conjointly commit or attempt to commit a robbery, or where the whole number of persons conjointly committing or attempting to commit a robbery, and of persons present and aiding such commission or attempt, amount to five or more, every person so committing, attempting, or aiding, is said to commit “gang-robbery”.

1.5.4 Mass Media

Media is a tool or a medium of communication such as radio, television and newspaper (Kamus Dewan, 2005). Mass media is collectively, the communications media, especially television, radio and newspapers that reach the mass of the people (Wiktionary, 2007). In this study, the mass media referred to a Malay newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*.

1.5.5 Crime Index

Crime Index is defined as crimes that are reported with sufficient regularity and with sufficient significance to be meaningful as an index to the crime situation (Amar, 2005). The layman's term of Crime Index would constitute those offences that are regular and common in occurrence. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2007), the UCR Program's Crime Index is composed of selected offenses used to gauge fluctuations in the volume and rate of crime reported to law enforcement.

In Malaysia, the Royal Malaysia Police Force (RMPPF) in its administrative function, divides Index Crime into two categories, violent crime and property crime. Violent Crime includes crimes of violence which are sufficiently regular and significant in occurrence. These include murder, attempted murder, gang-robbery with firearm, gang-robbery without firearm, robbery with firearm, robbery without firearm, rape and lastly voluntarily causing hurt.

Property crime includes those offences that involve the loss of property during which there is no use of violence by the perpetrators. There are seven types of crimes in this category. It includes housebreaking and theft by day, housebreaking and theft by night, theft of lorries and

van, theft of motorcar, theft of motorcycles and scooters, theft of bicycles and lastly other forms of theft.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to provide useful information to the public especially Malaysians on the homicide and robbery patterns in Malaysia. It is hoped that this would change the public's perceptions towards crime patterns and their frequency in Malaysia. This is on the basis that the public often misinterpret the regularity of the crime cases in Malaysia. It seems that the public perceives the severity of crime based on anecdotal portrayals instead of real empirical evidence. Data and analysis resulting from this study can serve as point of reference for other researchers in the future.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the findings from several past studies, in other words a literature review of relevant materials to this current study. According to Ahmad (2005), literature is any educational theoretically or empirically written article. This literature is usually published in journals, monographs, academic books and research reports. This chapter first examines the literature review on homicide followed by literature review on robbery.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

In order to understand the patterns of homicide victims and their perpetrators, it is first necessary to see whether there are any underlying behavioural or factors that predisposes a person to be homicide victims or perpetrators. The research about homicide in Japan, Ghana and United States below give some information about the pattern of homicide victims and perpetrators. These three studies will aid in better understanding of the phenomena of homicide.

2.2.1 Japan

A study done by Hata et al. (2001) used data from autopsy records and the police records between 1985 to 1995 in Sapporo and Akita, 1985 to 1999 in Toyama, 1990 to 1996 in Ibaraki and 1993 to 1995 in Chiba. This study investigated the demographic factors of both victims and perpetrators of homicide. This research is of relevance to the Malaysian situation

as a means of identifying whether similar demographic patterns exist, as well as what contributive factors lead to homicide in Asian countries.

Homicide patterns are strongly affected by several social characteristics. These include urbanization, population flux, degree of social boundaries of people, social norms and so on. According to Hata et al. (2001), homicide victims in Sapporo and the surrounding area like Akita, Toyama, Ibaraki and Chiba were aged between 30 to 60 years old. In Sapporo and Akita, victims aged below 5 years old had the highest number of cases whereas in Toyama, the highest number of cases involved elderly victims (more than 70 years old).

Nearly half of the victims in Sapporo, Akita and Toyama were male. In Ibaraki and Chiba, the male victims constitute one third of the total. The statistics of homicide cases in Okinawa from 1982 to 1992 showed that a majority of the victim were male (62%), and between the age of 30 to 50 years old (Nagamori et al., 1993).

The murderers in these five areas were between the ages of 30 to 50 years old. The majority of the murderers in Ibaraki, Chiba and Toyama were males. On the other hand, 50% and 40% of the murderers were women in Sapporo and Akita respectively.

The primary motive for homicide was an argument in all areas except in Akita. In Akita, the main motive or the reason for killing was issues of childcare like neonaticide. Financial problems and love affairs were also the cause for homicides here.

It was also found that, alcohol consumption was frequently associated with a homicidal act during an argument. Out of 406 victims, 23% of victims were under the influence of alcohol in which 69.6% of them (64 victims) were killed during or following an argument. The majority of the homicide victims related to alcohol consumption were males.

2.2.2 Ghana

This study examined incidents of homicide in a developing country. This criteria is similar to Malaysia, which is also a developing country. The pattern of violent crime in Ghana was studied by Appiahene- Gyamfi in 1998 and 2002.

Appiahene- Gyamfi (1998) believed that homicides were usually concentrated in rural areas or locations further from town. The study showed that homicides in Ghana were concentrated in rural countryside compared to three cities in Ghana which are Accra-Tema, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Kumasi. The statistical data in this study was derived from official police records between 1982 to 1993.

Appiahene- Gyamfi's study in 2002 found that homicide cases in Ghana from 1980 to 1996 were low. Only 0.2% of crimes during this period were homicides compared to other types of crime. The average rate of homicide was one incident per 200,000 of population.

Nearly 69% of the murderers in Ghana were between 22 to 38 years old (Appiahene- Gyamfi, 2002). However, the average age of murderers in urban areas or town like Acra, Tema, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi were 24 years old. In the countryside, all the ritual, land and chieftaincy-related homicide offenders were males with the average age of 34 years old.