

## Fear of Crime among Students of Kalasin Rajabhat University

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**Abstract:** While students in higher education have become a trending sample group for researches on fear of crime in academic circles of international affairs in areas of criminology, hardly any concerning research in case of Thailand has been carried out. This research therefore intends to explore the level of fear of crime, attitude toward seriousness of crimes, along with causes there of in Kalasin Rajabhat University among the students as well as conducting comparative analysis and testing correlation between the level of fear of crime and personal factors and prior experience and awareness of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University by quantitative research methodology; utilising a questionnaire to gather data from 400 samples of undergraduates of Kalasin Rajabhat University. The result has revealed that the majority of the respondents were female of average age 20, single with monthly income between 5,001-10,000 Baht, considered their physical health as great, highly involved with factors of campus social networks and trusted in public institutions as well as perceived risk of victimisation on campus at marginal levels. During past 12 months, most of the respondents had never experienced crime by themselves had no relative or any close friend who had experience crime or even acknowledged any crime within Kalasin Rajabhat University. The respondents considered occurrences of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University as infrequent, caused by alcohol sales and had a low overall fear of crime. The comparative analysis of level of fear of crime among Kalasin Rajabhat University students by gender, age, marital status, crime experience and perception of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University has pointed out varying degrees of fear of crime. Also, the test of correlation between levels of fear has revealed a relationship between the confidence in public institutions and perceived risk of victimisation on campus.

**Key words:** Fear of crime, student, Kalasin Rajabhat University, faith in public institution, perceived risk of victimisation

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### INTRODUCTION

The subject of “fear of crime” has been a significant matter that draws the attention of criminology spheres of international affairs since its early manifestation on American publications to describe such reaction of the public toward crime in circumstances of the inhabitants’ concern on city’s disarray during the 1930s (Bacanovic and Jovanova, 2012). Even the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice in 1967 (Warr, 2000) has proposed that fear is the ultimate danger following serious crimes. Such fear that is not negligible has led to further expansion of criminology from a primary focus on direct victims to include indirect victims or those who also perceive the sense of fear.

Although, the advancement of such research matter in European academic circles has not been as intense as that of the United States of America, practically non-existent prior to the 1960s, the official case study on

fear of crime of the United Kingdom was first initiated in 1982 followed by Republic of Slovenia a decade later (Bacanovic and Jovanova, 2012). Nevertheless, since late 1960s, the subject of fear of crime has become of significance (Lee, 1999) to criminologists and other social researchers (Lee, 2001) to such extent that brings about debates or even a proposition that fear of crime may have been a greater problem in daily life than the crime itself in the modern world (Warr, 1984; Bennett, 1990; Hale, 1992; 1996; Ewald, 2000; Beckett and Sasson, 2004).

The Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security Studies, University of Maribor, Slovenia has highlighted the unceasing significance of such matter in the late 2010s to the early 2020s (Mesko and Fields, 2012) by publicising a special edition of Journal of Criminal Justice and Security under the title of “Fear of Crime in the Capitals of South Eastern Europe” in 2012 as (another) good foundation for improvement of predictors of fear of crime, started from implementation of “risk averaging” (Newburn, 2013) which

was later questioned for inconsistency (Burruss *et al.*, 2010) at least by the four guest editors as the inconsistency was significant, especially when measuring inter-culturally to be more well-defined (Mesko *et al.*, 2012a, b).

In Thailand, only the Division of Research and Development (DRDRTP, 1996), the Faculty of Political Science, Ramkhamhang University (Chummanikul, 2000) and Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University (Neesang, 2005) have made an effort to explicate such sense of general public while the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol Unveristiy, the pioneers in study on fear of crime, concentrate on groups considered vulnerable or requiring special attentions such as women (Bubpachat, 1996; Rouchanukul, 2009), entrepreneurs (Pethploynil, 2003), slum population (Wattanasin, 2003), tourists (Amormmuneepong, 2005) and elderly (Sammastian, 2009), respectively whereas the College of Government, Rangsit University (Jernsittiparsert *et al.*, 2015) has just begun to give importance to the study of such perception in a community scale.

Result of a research has revealed over a decade ago that as high as 77.7% of Bangkok population felt unsafe from crime while going outside (Hemarajata, 1983) which led to a proposal that crime should be the first priority to be addressed (CUSRI, 1993) which made it into the 2012 to 2021 (RTPSO, 2014) as well as established as a policy on crime prevention and suppression of 2014 fiscal year that “highest priority should be given to controlling and reduction of severity of crimes which people perceived as threats to their lives and properties, primarily cases involving public properties that affect the fear of crime of the people” (RTPSO, 2014).

**Research objectives:** While students in higher education have become a trending sample group for researches on fear of crime in first-world countries such as the United States of America (Fisher and Sloan III, 2003; Jennings *et al.*, 2007; Truman, 2007; Burruss *et al.*, 2010; Deason, 2011; Hilinski *et al.*, 2011), Canada (Ashbourne, 2014), the United Kingdom (Morrall *et al.*, 2010) and Japan (Chockalingam and Srinivasan, 2009) or even in third-world countries such as India (Chockalingam and Srinivasan, 2009), Hong Kong (Chui *et al.*, 2012), Venezuela (Liebnitzky and Montero, 2013) and Nigeria (Radda and Ndubueze, 2013; Ehigie and Mobolaji, 2014) hardly any concerning research in case of Thailand has been conceived. This research therefore intends to:

- Investigate the level of fear of crime, attitude towards seriousness of crimes, along with causes thereof in Kalasin Rajabhat University among the students
- Conduct comparative analysis and test of correlation between the levels of fear of crime and personal factors and crime experience and awareness of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Samples and population:** The population was composed of the undergraduates registered in the first semester of 2014 academic year of Kalasin Rajabhat University of 400 samples.

**Research instrument:** The tool utilised in this research was a questionnaire that researchers compiled from related concepts, theories and researches and the crime perception index developed by May *et al.* (2008), consisted of four sections; personal information, crime experience and awareness of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University, fear of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University and attitude toward seriousness and causes of crimes in Kalasin Rajabhat University.

**Instrument testing:** The instrument was tested for content reliability in each article to determine the agreement to the research objectives, revise accordingly and tested for validity by circulating the revised questionnaire among a group of population of 30 people sharing common features with the samples and test the validity of each article by means of internal consistency with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The result thereof has showed a validity of 0.90.

**Data analysis:** In this research, researchers employed a quantitative research methodology; analysing the data with descriptive statistics that is percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA, Tukey’s pairwise comparison and Pearson’s correlation coefficient and interpret the result by criteria by Hinkle *et al.* (1998).

**Conceptual framework:** Independent variables and dependent variables are shown in Fig. 1.

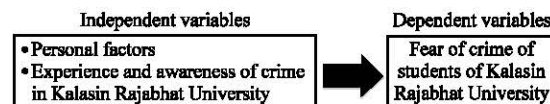


Fig. 1: Independent and dependent variables

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Personal information:** Of 400 respondents, 148 (37%) were male and 252 (63%) were female of average age 20. Most were single (76%) with monthly income between 5,001-10,000 Baht (60.8%). The respondents assessed factors of campus social networks that is trustworthiness of campus people and amount of friends and acquaintances as great ( $\bar{x} = 2.60$ ) but trust in public institutions such as security officers, police officers and judiciary as well as perception of risk of victimisation on campus at low levels ( $\bar{x} = 2.43$  and  $\bar{x} = 1.97$ , respectively).

**Experience and awareness of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University:** Majority of the respondents (98.5%) had never experienced crime or even had any relative or close friend who had during the past 12 months. Merely 6 respondents (1.5%) had experienced crime once or twice. Similarly in the aspect of awareness of crime occurred to people in Kalasin Rajabhat University during the past 12 months, most respondents (97.5%) were unaware of any crime; only 10 respondents (2.5%) had acknowledged crime once or twice.

For the past 12 months, the respondents considered crime occurrences in Kalasin Rajabhat University to be low ( $\bar{x} = 1.65$ ). Aside from crimes of law enforcement attention that is motorcycle-theft ( $\bar{x} = 1.83$ ), auto-theft ( $\bar{x} = 1.81$ ), kidnapping ( $\bar{x} = 1.72$ ), fraudulent ( $\bar{x} = 1.84$ ) and embezzlement ( $\bar{x} = 1.80$ ) assault ( $\bar{x} = 1.80$ ), theft ( $\bar{x} = 1.79$ ) and narcotics ( $\bar{x} = 1.72$ ) were considered highly severe among the respondents, whilst blackmail ( $\bar{x} = 1.48$ ) and extortion ( $\bar{x} = 1.48$ ) were deemed as the least serious (Table 1).

The respondents viewed alcoholic beverages to be the most common cause (70%) of crimes in Kalasin Rajabhat University followed by unlawful assembly (69.5%) and presence of place of amusement (67.3%), respectively (Table 2).

**Fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University:** In overall, the respondents were slightly fearful of crime ( $\bar{x} = 1.20$ ). For the past 12 months, fear of property being stolen was deemed most serious ( $\bar{x} = 2.28$ ) while fear of being murdered was considered least serious ( $\bar{x} = 1.88$ ). The fact that the number of respondents who pointed that crimes on the campus had reduced in the past 3 years was up to the second highest ( $\bar{x} = 2.21$ ), along with an anticipation that the level of fear of crime in the following 12 months would reduce from that of the past 12 months from an average of 2.15-2.06, positively

Table 1: Attitudes toward seriousness of crimes in Kalasin Rajabhat University

Crime	$\bar{x}$	Seriousness
Life, person and sex	1.60	Minor
First-degree murder	1.52	Minor
Second-degree murder	1.55	Minor
Manslaughter	1.59	Minor
Attempted murder	1.53	Minor
Assault	1.80	Minor
Rape	1.62	Minor
Property	1.59	Minor
Theft	1.79	Minor
Snatching	1.64	Minor
Blackmail	1.48	Marginal
Extortion	1.48	Marginal
Robbery	1.51	Minor
Gang-robbery	1.61	Minor
Stolen goods	1.58	Minor
Mischief	1.66	Minor
Police attention	1.80	Minor
Motorcycle-theft	1.83	Minor
Auto-theft	1.82	Minor
Kidnapping	1.72	Minor
Fraudulent	1.84	Minor
Embezzlement	1.80	Minor
Society	1.63	Minor
Firearms	1.55	Minor
Gambling	1.61	Minor
Narcotics	1.72	Minor
Prostitution	1.60	Minor
Possession and distribution of obscene material	1.66	Minor
Total	1.65	Minor

Table 2: Attitudes toward causes of crimes in Kalasin Rajabhat University

Causes	Amount (people)	Percentage
Presence of place of amusement	269	67.3
Sales of alcoholic beverages	280	70.0
Presence of gambling parlour	141	35.3
Prostitution	68	17.0
Narcotics	203	50.8
Unlawful assembly of adolescents	278	69.5
Excessive residential density	39	9.8
Depression	57	14.3
Excessive immigration	135	33.8
Increased immigration	28	7.0
Corrupted morale	118	29.5
Poor security measures	123	30.8

implied that the trend of fear of crime among the students of Kalasin Rajabhat University would continue to drop (Table 3).

**Comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University:** The comparative analysis of the levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University comprised of a comparative analysis of gender differences by analysing the variance between two means with t-statistics and analysis of age, marital status, monthly income, experience of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University and awareness of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University with one-way ANOVA and Tukey’s pairwise comparison, respectively.

Table 3: Fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University

Fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University	$\bar{x}$	Degree
Past 12 months	2.15	Minor
You are worried of being raped	1.91	Minor
You are worried of being assaulted with a weapon	2.02	Minor
You are worried of property being stolen	2.28	Minor
You are worried of being victimised while entering university at night	2.12	Minor
You are worried of being murdered	1.88	Minor
You are worried of trespassers committing crimes while you are away	2.03	Minor
You consider law enforcement as an effective protection against crime on campus	2.14	Minor
You believe that crimes on campus have reduced during the past three years	2.21	Minor
You think that fear of victimisation causes you to give up something you might want to do	1.93	Minor
Next 12 months	2.06	Minor
You are worried of trespassers stealing properties	2.03	Minor
You are worried that someone might steal your car/motorcycle/bicycle	2.08	Minor
You are worried that someone might steal your property	1.96	Minor
You are worried that someone might rob you	1.97	Minor
You are worried that someone might hurt you with a knife, gun or other weapon	1.97	Minor
You are worried that someone might hurt you with hands, feet or other organs	2.17	Minor
You are worried that someone might force or try to rape you	2.00	Minor
Overall	2.10	Minor

Table 4: Comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by gender

Gender	$\bar{x}$	t-value	p-value
Male	2.19	3.57	0.001
Female	1.95		

Table 5: Comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by age

Age (years)	$\bar{x}$	F-value	p-value
18	1.69	6.924	0.000
19	1.80		
20	2.16		
21	2.26		
22	2.40		
23 and above	2.17		

**Gender:** The comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by gender has discovered that male and female were fearful of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University at different levels at statistical significance of 0.01, that is, male ( $\bar{X} = 2.19$ ) had greater degree of fear than female ( $\bar{X} = 1.95$ ) (Table 4).

**Age:** The comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by age has revealed that the levels of fear of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University were different at statistical significance of 0.01 that is students of age 22 had the highest level of fear ( $\bar{X} = 2.40$ ) whereas students of age 18 had the lowest level of fear ( $\bar{X} = 1.69$ ) (Table 5).

**Marital status:** The comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by marital status has found that the levels of fear of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University were different at statistical significance of 0.01 that is students who had a date but not married had the highest level of fear ( $\bar{X} = 2.51$ ) while students who had already married were on the lowest level ( $\bar{X} = 1.69$ ) (Table 6).

Table 6: Comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by marital status

Marital status	$\bar{x}$	F-value	p-value
Single	1.91	31.133**	0.000
Dating	2.51		
Married	1.69		

Table 7: Comparative analysis on the variance of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by marital status

Marital status	$\bar{x}$	Single (1.91)	Dating (2.51)	Married (2.51)
Single	1.91	-	0.000	0.676
Dating	2.51	0.000	-	0.007
Married	1.69	0.676	0.007	-

Table 8: Comparative analysis on the variance of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by income

Income (Baht)	$\bar{x}$	F-value	p-value
1-5,000	1.90	1.656	0.159
5,001-10,000	2.09		
10,001-15,000	2.08		
15,001-20,000	1.82		
>20,001	1.58		

Pairwise comparative analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by marital status has showed that students who had a date but not married were on a different level of fear from both the single and married students at statistical significance of 0.01; single and married students were thus on the same level (Table 7).

**Income:** The comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by income has uncovered that students who had different income levels had the same level of fear of crime at statistical significance of 0.05 (Table 8).

**Crime experience:** The comparative analysis of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat

Table 9: Comparative analysis on the variance of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by crime experience in past 12 months (personal)

Crime experience	$\bar{x}$	t-value	p-value
No	2.02	-4.182	0.000
Yes	3.18		

Table 10: Comparative analysis on the variance of levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by crime experience in past 12 months (relatives and/or close friends)

Relatives and/or close friends experienced crime	$\bar{x}$	t-value	p-value
No	2.02	-4.182	0.000
Yes	3.18		

Table 11: Comparative analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by awareness of crime in the past 12 months

Crime awareness	$\bar{x}$	t-value	p-value
Never	2.01	-5.125	0.000
Yes	3.11		

University by crime experience in the past 12 months has found different levels of fear of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University at statistical significance of 0.01 that is students who had experienced crime once or twice ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ) had a higher level of fear of crime than those who had not ( $\bar{X} = 2.03$ ) (Table 9).

Likewise, students whose relatives and/or close friends had experienced crime once or twice ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ) had higher level of fear than the students whose relatives and/or close friends had not ( $\bar{X} = 2.03$ ) (Table 10).

**Crime awareness:** The comparative analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by crime awareness in the past 12 months has discovered different levels of fear of crime in Kalasin Rajabhat University at statistical significance of 0.01, that is, students who had acknowledged instance of crime once or twice ( $\bar{X} = 3.11$ ) had higher level of fear than students who had not ( $\bar{X} = 2.02$ ) (Table 11).

**Correlation analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University:** The analysis on correlation between levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University, campus social networks (trustworthy individuals, friends and acquaintances), faith in public institutions (security officers, police officers and judiciary) and perceived risk of victimisation on campus by means of Pearson's has revealed that (Table 12):

- Faith in public institutions ( $r = -0.108$ ) had a negative relationship with level of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University
- Perceived risk of victimisation on campus ( $r = 0.346$ ) had a positive relationship with level of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University

Table 12: Correlation analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University

Analysis	Pearson's correlation coefficient (fear of crime)	p-values	Relationship scale
Campus social networks	-0.020	0.691	Very weak
Faith in public institutions	-0.108	0.031	Very weak
Perceived risk of victimisation on campus	0.346	0.000	Weak

- Campus social networks are a factor unrelated to level of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University

The comparative analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by gender has highlighted the ultimate predictive capability to level of fear of crime (Hale, 1996; Chockalingam and Srinivasan, 2009) that gender differences contribute to the variance in levels of fear of crime, corresponding to Wattannasin (2003), Callanan and Teasdale (2009), Chockalingam and Srinivasan (2009), May *et al.* (2010) and Mesko *et al.* (2012a, b) including numerous existing researches which results suggest that female has higher level of fear of crime than male (Mesch, 2000; Pantazis, 2000; Chadee *et al.*, 2007) two to three-fold (Hilinski, 2009; Ozascilar, 2013; Newburn, 2013). Even though, the level of fear of crime of female tends to be greater than the actual chance of them being victimised in such crime (Warr, 1984, 1985; Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Chui *et al.*, 2012) in this case, it has been found that male has higher level of fear than female, consistent with Jermsittiparsert *et al.*, (2015).

The comparative analysis by age as another variable commonly taken into account in analysis of relationship with fear of crime, whether resulted in positive, negative or weakly related or even concluded that such relationship is not linear that is middle-aged people tend to have higher level of fear than both older and younger individuals or even middle-aged people tend to have lower level of fear than both older and younger individuals (Kury *et al.*, 2001). The results from the survey on students of Kalasin Rajabhat University have proved that age can still be a factor that contributes to the difference in the levels of fear of crime, conforming to Adu-Mireku (2002), McCrear *et al.* (2005), Chockalingam and Srinivasan (2009), Rouchanukul (2009) and Bacanovic and Jovanova (2012). This case has showed a trend where level of fear of crime increases accordingly with age of the samples.

However, the comparative analysis by marital status does not agree with the result by May *et al.* (2010). As for the comparative analysis by income, despite the fact that Garofalo (1981) has proposed that income is an independent variable that contributes to level of fear of

crime as a general model which corresponds to a number of researches that further indicate that income is a factor of negative relationship with level of fear of crime (Ackah, 2000) as those who have high income usually choose to live in places where safety can be perceived (Ackah, 2000), this case has found that income is not a variable that affects the level of fear of crime, conforming to Chockalingam and Srinivasan (2009) and May *et al.* (2010).

Experience of crime, either personal or of relatives and/or close friends is a variable that contributes to the difference in level of fear of crime of the samples to a very distinctive extent, corresponding to Tseloni and Zarafonitou (2008), Chockalingam and Srinivasan (2009) (only the Japanese instance), May *et al.* (2010) and Jermsttiparsert *et al.* (2015) as crime awareness is corresponding to Smith *et al.* (2001), Rouchanukul (2009) and May *et al.* (2010) (only the female instance).

Nevertheless, even though Mesko *et al.* (2012a-c) has found that the factor of social networks is related to the fear of crime but the factor of faith in public institutions is not the case of Kalasin Rajabhat University has suggested that social network is a factor unrelated to fear of crime among students whereas the factor of faith in public institutions is related. The perceived risk of campus victimisation still remains a contributing variable to the fear of crime as in this case, corresponding to Smith *et al.* (2001), May *et al.* (2010) and Ozascilar (2013).

## CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis on levels of fear of crime among students of Kalasin Rajabhat University by gender has highlighted the ultimate predictive capability to level of fear of crime (Hale, 1996; Chockalingam and Srinivasan, 2009) that gender differences contribute to the variance in levels of fear of crime, corresponding to Wattanasin (2003), Callanan and Teasdale (2009), Chockalingam and Srinivasan (2009), May *et al.* (2010) and Mesko *et al.* (2012a) including numerous existing researches which results suggest that female has higher level of fear of crime than male (Mesch, 2000; Pantazis, 2000; Chadee *et al.*, 2007) 2-3 fold (Hilinski, 2009; Ozascilar, 2013; Newburn, 2013). Even though the level of fear of crime of female tends to be greater than the actual chance of them being victimised in such crime (Warr, 1984, 1985; Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Chui *et al.*, 2013), in this case, it has been found that male has higher level of fear than female, consistent with Jermsttiparsert *et al.* (2015).

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Experience of crime, either personal or of relatives and/or close friends is a variable that contributes to the difference in level of fear of crime of the samples to a very distinctive extent, corresponding to Tseloni and Zarafonitou (2008), Chockalingam and Srinivasan (2009) (only the Japanese instance), May *et al.* (2010) and Jermsttiparsert *et al.* (2015) as crime awareness is, corresponding to Smith *et al.* (2001), Rouchanukul (2009) and May *et al.* (2010) (only the female instance).

Nevertheless, even though Mesko *et al.* (2012b) has found that the factor of social networks is related to the fear of crime but the factor of faith in public institutions is not, the case of Kalasin Rajabhat University has suggested that social network is a factor unrelated to fear of crime among students whereas the factor of faith in public institutions is related. The perceived risk of campus victimisation still remains a contributing variable to the fear of crime as in this case, corresponding to Smith *et al.* (2001), May *et al.* (2010) and Ozascilar (2013).

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