

Consequences of citizens' non-reporting of crime to the Police: A survey of Mthatha Policing Precinct, South Africa

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Abstract

Whilst citizens are at liberty to decide whether or not to report a crime to the police, non-reporting of crime to the police may come with a heavy price. This study evaluates the consequences of non-reporting of crime to the police in South Africa's Mthatha policing area. It comes against a backdrop of a rise in criminal activities in South Africa. A survey was conducted among households in selected residential areas of Mthatha, from where 120 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling technique. Data analysis was done using SPSS to reveal both descriptive and inferential statistics. From the analysis, continued engagement in criminal activities by perpetrators, resulting in absence of investigations was found to be the major impact of non-reporting of crime to the police. Findings also revealed that the victims bear the most implications of non-reporting of crime. Inability to identify crime hot spots, misallocation of policing resources and inability to determine crime trends and tendencies were also viewed as significant impacts of non-reporting of crime to the police. A factor analysis revealed officials' inability to determine trends and tendencies that could inform policing strategies as the most significant component.

Keywords: Crime reporting, crime control, non-reporting, victimisation.

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