

Motivational Factors Affecting the Acquisition and Usage of Firearm in Batangas: An Output for Policy Enhancement and Crime Prevention

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Abstract— Among Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines has the second-largest number of gun ownership. With the number of firearms produced, it has now become the most available and convenient tool ever to be used by the lawless criminal. While the link between guns and crime is intricate, easy access to firearms significantly contributes to criminal activity. Access to a gun can make the difference between wanting to hurt someone and actual committing some violent crimes. The study generally aimed to analyze the motivational factors affecting acquisition and use of firearm in Batangas as the basis for policy enhancement and crime prevention. This study used a quantitative descriptive research method through a survey questionnaire as main source of data and made use of sixty (60) person deprived of liberty (PDL) who committed firearm-related cases and currently incarcerated at Batangas Provincial Jail. Results showed that personal security and availability of supply are the common motivation for acquiring firearm. Meanwhile, self-defense and defense of relatives, and the outburst of emotion are the most common factors inducing the commission of crime involving firearm. The study may be the basis for enhancing government activities on unlicensed firearms.

Keywords— Crime Prevention, Firearm, Firearm Acquisition and Use, Motivational Factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Firearms, from their humble beginnings as rudimentary weapons to their sophisticated modern forms, have played a complex and multifaceted role in human history. They have been tools of both progress and destruction, simultaneously enabling defense and security, revolutionizing hunting and food production, and driving technological advancement. However, their destructive potential has fuelled countless wars, genocides, and acts of violence, causing immense suffering and loss of life.

The Philippines' high rate of gun ownership in Southeast Asia, coupled with weak gun control, leads to frequent firearm use in criminal acts (Sylvester, 2015). Although there is a law regulating the license of firearms and its possession, many gun owners failed to renew their licenses due to the inconvenience and inaccessible of requirements and procedures especially in the provinces (Mellijor, 2023). This circumstance increases the number of unlicensed firearms circulating in the country, and somehow, some of them were used in crimes.

However, easy access to firearms is a key factor in the complex relationship between guns and crime. The presence of

a gun lowers the threshold for violence, escalating conflicts that might otherwise remain less severe. For criminals like robbers and rapists, a firearm increases their confidence and ability to commit crimes. According to Mattson, Sige & Mercado (2020), a complex and variable constellation of risk and protective factors can be avoided when tight restrictions on ownership of firearms will be pushed in the country like in Japan that has been cited as one reason for the society low rate of violent crime.

To regulate the proliferation of unlicensed firearms, illegal manufacture and sale of ammunition and parts of firearms, the Republic Act 8294 was amended by Republic Act No. 10591. Under the existing law on firearms, civilians were not authorized to own and possess high-powered firearms but there are number of incidents were transpired with the use of a high-powered firearm. This simply implies that these firearms were unlicensed or loose. According to Papa (2007), there are over 800,000 registered firearms another 500,000 unlicensed firearms. There are also 87% of evidence firearms were unlicensed and 78% of murders were victimized using small arms.

Evidently, the number of available firearms whether licensed or unlicensed greatly contributes to the increase of crimes involving firearms by increasing number of aggressors (RAND, 2018). People intend to acquire a firearm for personal security to defend and protect himself/herself against lawless elements, protect his/her business or property and to repel the attack of an assailant. In addition, some gun enthusiast acquires a firearm for sport and practical shooting and sometimes their source of living (Parker, et al, 2017).

This study aims to determine the relationship between firearm acquisition and usage to the motive and factors inducing the commission of a crime. The result of this research is very significant to further regulate the acquisition of firearms and ammunition, the encouragement to renew firearm's license and further prevent the use firearms in the commission of crimes and therefore can be utilized in the policy enhancement and crime prevention strategies of the concerned agency of the government.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study is quantitative descriptive research employing a survey questionnaire as the data gathering tool. A survey questionnaire was used to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, the motivation in acquiring firearms and the factors inducing the commission of a crime involving firearms.

B. Participants and Sample Technique

The respondents of the study were sixty (60) persons deprived of liberty who committed crimes involving the use of firearms, currently detained in Batangas Provincial Jail. This study made use of purposive convenient sampling since consent must be acquired before the administration of the questionnaire.

C. Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire is self-constructed composed of three (3) parts: Part 1 is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, civil status, educational attainment, employment status and type of firearms used. Part 2 covers the respondent's motivation in firearms acquisition with regards to personal security, availability of supply, the influence of other person, and lifestyle and business; Part 3 includes the factors inducing commission of a crime involving firearms in terms of self-defense or defense of relative, rewards, promise or consideration and outburst of emotion. The questionnaire undergoes expert validation and pilot testing for internal consistency of the constructs.

D. Data Gathering Procedure

The collection of data was done through the administration of a validated self-made survey questionnaire to the selected respondents. The request letter was sent to the Provincial Administrator of Batangas Provincial Jail and Batangas City Jail Warden to gather pertinent data on crimes committed with the use of firearms and the number of PDL in their respective jail for the administration of the questionnaire.

E. Data Analysis

The data gathered were encoded, tallied and analyzed using different statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), independent sample t-test, f-test and Pearson-product moment correlation. In addition, gather data were treated using statistical software known as PASW version 18 to further interpret the result of the study.

F. Ethical Consideration

The administrator of the Batangas Provincial Jail through the Office of Governor must express his approval to administer the questionnaire to the selected PDL. Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and participated voluntarily. Strict confidentiality was maintained, protecting respondents' identities, rights, and presumption of innocence. No personal information was disclosed in the research.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As seen on the Table I, most of the respondents were in the age range 36 to 40 years old, married, elementary level, employed prior to their imprisonment, had an income of Php5,000 below and using an unlicensed firearm. This means

that the respondents were matured, unable to sustain their needs because of low income, unable to procure firearms legally and used their firearms in the commission of the crime for profit. As stated by Gillado et al. (2008), the population density and poverty rates were important factors. They have a positive connection to their connection with the crime rate. The rise in unemployment and crime levels have a substantial relation.

TABLE I. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
25 years old and below	11	18.30
26 to 35years old	11	18.30
36 to 45years old	29	48.30
46 years old and above	9	15.00
Civil Status		
Single	31	51.70
Married	29	48.30
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	17	28.30
High School	30	50.00
Vocational	2	3.30
College	11	18.30
Occupation Before imprisonment		
Employed	44	73.30
Unemployed	16	26.70
Monthly Income Before imprisonment		
below Php5,000	29	48.30
Php5,001 – Php15,000	24	40.00
Php15,001 or more	7	11.70
Type of Firearm Used		
Licensed	3	5.00
With Expired License	7	11.70
Uncertain	20	33.30
Unlicensed	30	50.00

TABLE II. Motivation in Acquiring Firearms

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Personal Security	2.74	Agree	1
2. Availability of Supply	2.65	Agree	2
3. Influence of other Person	2.46	Disagree	3
4. Lifestyle and Business	2.29	Disagree	4
Composite Mean	2.53	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table II shows the motivation in acquiring firearms. The composite mean score of 2.53 indicates that the respondents agree on the above-mentioned indicators. It is obvious that respondents were motivated to possess a firearm, and they have their own reasons for using their firearms in the commission of crimes. De Guzman and Villacarlos (2014) mentioned that a great number of unlicensed and unregistered firearms owned by various irresponsible citizens have a huge impact in the country. In addition, Strother (2015) also cited that high crime rates indicate that many illegal guns are in the hand of criminals and lawbreakers.

The respondents identified "personal security" as the primary motivation for acquiring firearms, receiving the highest weighted mean score of 2.74, which aligns with Burnett's (2015) assertion that individuals seek weapons for safety from intruders. The second motivation, "availability of supply," scored 2.65, indicating that firearm access is influenced by

market availability and illegal trade, a concern echoed by Sylverter (2015) regarding the Philippines' poor regulation of firearm ownership, while Cook (2018) highlights that the accessibility of arms significantly affects violent crime dynamics. Conversely, the respondents disagreed with the motivation "lifestyle and business," which received a lower score of 2.29, suggesting that firearms are primarily owned for personal safety rather than recreational purposes, a view supported by Slick (2010), who argues that gun ownership is justified for self-protection and defense against tyranny.

TABLE III. Motivation in Acquiring Firearms

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Self-defense and Defense of Relatives	2.52	Agree	2
2. Rewards, Promise or Consideration	2.31	Disagree	3
3. Outburst of Emotions	2.64	Agree	1
Composite Mean	2.49	Disagree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table III presents the factors inducing the commission of a crime involving firearms. The composite mean score of 2.49 indicates that the respondents disagree on the above-mentioned indicators. From the three variables, two of which agreed by the respondents but affected the entire findings with one disagreed variable. The majority of respondents believe that rewards, promises, or considerations are not primary factors in firearm-related crimes, aligning with McLeod's (2017) view that safety is a fundamental need motivating individuals to arm themselves for protection. The item "outburst of emotion" received the highest weighted mean score of 2.64, indicating that many respondents used firearms in response to provocation, followed by "self-defense and defense of relatives" at 2.52, reflecting instances of justifiable gun-related homicides noted by Matelle (2015). Conversely, respondents disagreed with the importance of "reward, promise or consideration," which scored 2.31, suggesting they are not hired killers but rather use firearms for personal reasons, a finding supported by Cameron (n.d.) as cited by McGuinness (2013), which links violent acts to strains in personal or professional relationships.

TABLE IV. Difference of Responses on Motivation in Acquiring Firearms in terms of Personal Security when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Age	0.220	0.882	Not Significant
2. Civil Status	1.046	0.300	Not Significant
3. Educational Attainment	1.156	0.335	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	0.139	0.890	Not Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	0.947	0.394	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	0.331	0.803	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table IV shows the comparison of responses motivation in acquiring firearms in terms of personal security. As shown, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level which means that there was no significant difference on the responses across the respondents' profile. This further implies that the

motivation of owning firearms is for personal security. According to Burnett (2015), the most prevalent cause provided for gun ownership is security, amid the preconceptions of many.

TABLE V. Difference of Responses on Motivation in Acquiring Firearms in terms of Availability of Supply when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Age	3.966	0.012	Significant
2. Civil Status	2.105	0.040	Significant
3. Educational Attainment	1.984	0.127	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	0.735	0.466	Not Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	0.554	0.578	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	0.402	0.752	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table V disposed the comparison of responses on the respondents' motivation in acquiring firearms in terms of availability of supply. There was a significant difference observed on age (p-value = 0.012) and civil status (p-value = 0.040) because the resulted p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level which indicates that the responses differ significantly and based on the post hoc test conducted, thus, age 26 to 30 years old and single are more motivated in acquiring firearms. This entails that, people who are young and no parental responsibility invest their money for owning a firearm. As they get older, matured and become married, they prioritize the need of the family and reduce their motivation for acquiring firearms. In addition, young and single are considered adventurous and willing to try everything for pleasure. Pappas (2013) further noted that more high school and college students in America intend to own weapons in adulthood than they did in their own homes. College students appear to be more liberal than average and many of them say they intend to have a weapon in their homes.

TABLE VI. Difference of Responses on Motivation in Acquiring Firearms in terms of Influence of other Person when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Age	0.838	0.479	Not Significant
2. Civil Status	0.672	0.504	Not Significant
3. Educational Attainment	0.195	0.899	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	0.938	0.352	Not Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	0.024	0.976	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	1.084	0.363	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table VI presents the comparison of responses motivation in acquiring firearms in terms of the influence of other person. It was observed that all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level which means that there was no significant difference exists and implies that the responses do not differ across the respondents' profile. This further indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that no other person influenced them for acquiring firearms. Owning a firearm is their personal choice as influenced by their experience, the perceived threat and media. They want that acquire a firearm to

become private since majority of them owned unlicensed firearm. Burnet (2015) argues that humans' inherent tendency to prepare for the worst explains why, in environments where many people own guns, individuals may feel compelled to own one themselves.

TABLE VII. Difference of Responses on Motivation in Acquiring Firearms in terms of Lifestyle and Business when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
1. Age	3.805	0.015	Significant
2. Civil Status	0.691	0.492	Not Significant
3. Educational Attainment	0.844	0.476	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	2.445	0.018	Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	1.742	0.184	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	1.108	0.354	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table shown the comparison of responses on the respondents' motivation in acquiring firearms in terms of lifestyle and business. As indicated in the table, there was a significant difference observed on age (p-value = 0.015) and occupation before imprisonment (p-value = 0.018) because the resulted p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level. This means that the responses differ significantly and based on the post hoc test conducted, age 26 to 30 years old and employed are more motivated in acquiring firearms. This also mean that the young ones are gun enthusiasts and since they are employed, they have the means to buy firearms. According to Walters (2011), purchase of firearm needs money and permit to carry it. Depending on where the person resides, one may need to look for a skilled trainer to interrupt his/her ordinary practice every day so that he/she receives the necessary lessons as needed. In other words, it needs action from owner's part, and it includes hours of workouts and the resources to do that.

TABLE VIII. Difference of Responses on the Factors Inducing the Commission of Crime involving Firearms in terms of Self-defense and Defense of Relatives when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Age	1.262	0.296	Not Significant
2. Civil Status	0.396	0.694	Not Significant
3. Educational Attainment	0.922	0.436	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	0.569	0.571	Not Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	0.037	0.964	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	0.783	0.509	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table shows the comparison of responses on the factors inducing the commission of a crime involving firearms in terms of self-defense and defense of relatives. As shown, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level which means that there was no significant difference exists and it implies that the responses do not differ across the respondents' profile. This further implies that the respondents agree that one of the factors inducing the use of a firearm was self-defense or defense of relatives regardless of their profile variables. According to Walters (2011) owning a firearm at home is a

great idea. It implies that one must choose to bring accountability for his/her own safety and security. One really need to be responsible for his/her self-defense and live armed.

TABLE IX. Difference of Responses on the Factors Inducing the Commission of Crime involving Firearms in terms of Rewards, Promise or Consideration when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Age	1.397	0.253	Not Significant
2. Civil Status	0.264	0.793	Not Significant
3. Educational Attainment	0.863	0.466	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	1.483	0.143	Not Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	0.407	0.667	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	2.017	0.122	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table IX presents the comparison of responses on the factors inducing the commission of a crime involving firearms in terms of rewards, promise or consideration. As shown, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level. The results show no significant difference in responses across respondent profiles. This further indicates that the respondents have the same response on rewards, promise or consideration as a factor in inducing commission of a crime. The study conducted by Cameron (n.d) as cited by McGuinness (2013) reveals that people deals in a small amount of money when someone recruits someone else to murder, especially considering the risk and consequences. On the contrary, a professional hitman who is hired by criminal organizations manages to escape. The respondents' disagreement on their motive in the commission of a crime like rewards, promise or consideration only means that they are amateur criminal and unable to avoid arrest.

TABLE X. Difference of Responses on the Factors Inducing the Commission of Crime involving Firearms in terms of Outburst of Emotions when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Indicators	F-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Age	1.325	0.275	Not Significant
2. Civil Status	0.163	0.871	Not Significant
3. Educational Attainment	0.793	0.503	Not Significant
4. Occupation Before imprisonment	1.481	0.144	Not Significant
5. Monthly Income Before imprisonment	1.575	0.216	Not Significant
6. Type of Firearms Used	0.430	0.733	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table X shows the comparison of responses on the factors inducing the commission of a crime involving firearms in terms of an outburst of emotions. Result shows that all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level. This implies that profile variables do not affect the perception of the respondents on the outburst of emotion as one of the factors affecting the commission of crimes involving firearms. This further indicates that the profile variables do not affect their perception of the outburst of emotions. According to Striepe (2013) owning a firearm or even seeing one changes the way people behave, and it can be called as "weapons effect". Study claims that the

existence of gun in a room made people more aggressive and some studies it gives a stronger electrical shock. An individual drive more vigorously when there is a gun behind the trunk than to that without a gun – although intuition might warn him/her about honking the horn of his/her car while displaying your gun. People are born to recognize hazards instantly and studies argue that people recognized gun instantly as snakes. It seems as if gun cause risk and aggression in the same portion of one’s brain.

TABLE XI. Relationship Between the Motivation in Acquiring Firearms and the Factors Inducing the Commission of Crime involving Firearms in terms of Self-defense and Defense of Relatives

Indicators	r-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Personal Security	0.485**	0.000	Highly Significant
2. Availability of Supply	0.285*	0.027	Significant
3. Influence of other Person	0.355**	0.005	Significant
4. Lifestyle and Business	0.621**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < *0.05; **0.01

Table XI depicts the relationship between the motivation in acquiring firearms and the factors inducing the commission of crimes involving firearms in terms of self-defense and defense of relatives. As seen from the table, the computed r-values indicate a moderate positive correlation, and the resulted p-values were all less than 0.05 and 0.01 alpha levels. This means that a significant correlation exists between positive motivations for acquiring firearms and the likelihood of committing firearm-related crimes; stronger positive motivations are associated with a higher likelihood of such crimes. It is also an indication that a person with business needs more protection and acquiring a firearm can ensure their business and their personal security against criminals or business competitors. Raphelson (2018) mentioned that there are 48 percent claim they own a weapon, primarily for security, according to the Pew Research Centre. But specialists have split themselves over years over how often individuals use weapons in self-defense. Latest data indicate that almost 0.9 percent of offenses from 2007 to 2011 have been protected by individuals with a weapon.

TABLE XII. Relationship Between Motivation in Acquiring Firearms and the Factors Inducing the Commission of Crime involving Firearms in terms of Rewards, Promise or Consideration

Indicators	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
1. Personal Security	0.370**	0.004	Significant
2. Availability of Supply	0.352**	0.006	Significant
3. Influence of other Person	0.611**	0.000	Highly Significant
4. Lifestyle and Business	0.264**	0.042	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < *0.05; **0.01

Table XII reveals the relationship between the motivation in acquiring firearms and the factors inducing the commission of crimes involving firearms in terms of rewards, promise or consideration. As shown, the computed r-values indicate a moderate positive correlation and the resulted p-values were all less than 0.05 and 0.01 alpha levels. The study revealed a

significant positive correlation, thus, stronger positive motivations for gun ownership were linked to a greater likelihood of committing gun-related crimes. It means that the motivation in acquiring firearms especially the influence of other person is affected by the pleasure or rewards, promise and consideration. Basically, contract killing involves money, and it motivates a person to commit a crime. In the study conducted by Cameron (n.d) as cited by McGuinness (2013), claim that life is more valuable, the danger of being imprisoned, that means they should demand big amount of money.

TABLE XIII. Relationship Between Motivation in Acquiring Firearms and the Factors Inducing the Commission of Crime involving Firearms in terms of Outburst of Emotions

Indicators	r-value	P-value	Interpretation
1. Personal Security	0.418**	0.001	Significant
2. Availability of Supply	0.300*	0.020	Significant
3. Influence of other Person	0.511**	0.000	Highly Significant
4. Lifestyle and Business	0.285**	0.028	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < *0.05; **0.01

Table XIII presents the relationship between the motivation in acquiring firearms and the factors inducing the commission of crimes involving firearms in terms of an outburst of emotions. It reveals that the computed r-values indicate a moderate positive correlation and the resulted p-values were all less than 0.05 and 0.01 alpha levels. The data shows a significant link which is the stronger the positive reasons for getting a gun, the higher the chance of that gun being used in a crime. In the same way, people who are motivated in acquiring firearms through the influence of other person are more likely to draw their firearms if they experience extreme anger or fear. Nicholson (2013) suggests that gun ownership not only alters an individual's behavior but also how others perceive them. Research involving over 600 participants indicated that images of men holding guns were perceived as more powerful and strong than those holding other objects, such as power tools.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the persons deprived of liberty respondents were in their adulthood, without parental obligations, obtained secondary education, employed and receiving below the standard wage, and used unlicensed firearm in the commission of crimes. Accordingly, motivations for acquiring firearms include personal security and supply availability, with crimes often linked to self-defense, emotional outbursts, and notable differences in motivations based on age and civil status, indicating that individuals aged 26 to 30 and those who are single are particularly motivated to own firearms. A significant relationship exists between personal security, lifestyle, and the influence of others as factors contributing to firearm-related crimes, indicating that emotional outbursts and motivations can lead individuals to use firearms defensively or in the commission of crimes.

The national government and law enforcement agencies should intensify efforts against unlicensed firearms, promote a Gun Amnesty Program, and enhance community-police coordination to reduce private arming for security.

Additionally, corrective programs in detention facilities and strict licensing requirements, including neuro-psychiatric evaluations, are essential to ensure responsible firearm ownership and safety.

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