CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 described in detail the findings of the study after an analysis of data obtained. This chapter concludes the research findings and returns to the research questions raised in the hypothesis. The objectives of the research are restated to relate to the important findings. The limitations of the study are highlighted. Finally, the significant contribution to current knowledge is stated and recommendations for future studies are put forward.

6.2 Conclusions

This research has produced significant findings about the teenage students' perception of safety in relation to non-political graffiti vandalism, with reference to outdoor lighting levels in urban areas of Tehran. It has highlighted SCP variables and urban environmental variables that strongly correlate with the degree of graffiti vandalism damages.

The conclusions presented here are collated here to answer the research questions. The research questions are:

- What is the relationship between teenagers' perception of safety, non political graffiti vandalism occurrence and outdoor lighting levels in urban areas of Tehran?

- What are the SCP variables and urban environmental variables that contribute to high degree graffiti damages in urban areas of Tehran?

The conclusions are derived from re examination of the literature and the empirical study in urban areas of Tehran.

This is important due to paucity of research about vandalism, graffiti, studies on the effectiveness of implementing environmental initiatives to tackle graffiti vandalism and to improve perception of safety. Re-examination of the literature comprises of investigating the respondents' perception of safety in relation to vandalism occurrence in urban areas of Tehran. It also reveals findings about perception of respondents' regarding the various aspects of vandalism along with its main causes and risk factors.

The findings from re-examination of the literature present a critical review on the issue of graffiti and vandalism in urban areas of Tehran.

The study reveals that occurrence of three common types of vandalism damages in Tehran, namely damages to vehicles (cars, motor bikes and bicycles), damages to public properties in neighbourhood and damages to landscaped green areas in neighbourhood are a concern to teenage students. It can affect respondents' perception of safety. The findings indicate that increasing the rate of such types of vandalism in neighbourhoods has negative effects on respondents' perception of safety.

Preventing such types of vandalism in line with implementing other known initiatives to increase perception of safety will help policy makers to increase perception of safety among teenage students.

Despite the conflicting and contrasting views on the causes of vandalism, revenge and show-off to friends are known by majority of respondents as the most likely causes of vandalism in Tehran. Moreover, results show that show-off to friends is recognised by male students as the most likely causes of vandalism whereas female students defined revenge as the most likely causes of vandalism. It should be noted that enjoyment of taking risk is known as the least likely causes of vandalism by both groups.

The present survey reveals that presence of police, CCTV and punishment are rated as the most effective measures to tackle vandalism by potential offenders.

It indicated the important role of formal surveillance and criminal justice programs to combat vandalism in urban areas of Tehran.

The second part of the conclusion is based on the findings that highlight the original contribution of this research. This part is trying to give a response to the debate over the effectiveness of implementing lighting initiatives (lighting vs. No lighting) to tackle vandalism and graffiti that leads to initiation of this research. This research first detailed how respondents view lighting as a deterrent to graffiti vandalism and secondly it investigated SCP variables and studied urban environmental variables that contributed to high degree graffiti damages in urban areas of Tehran. It is to put a value on lighting levels and other studied SCP variables and related urban environmental variables to find out how these variables can be implemented as effective environmental strategies to tackle high degree graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran.

The findings from the second part of the study did not support "dark campus theory" and revealed that vandalism and graffiti are more likely to happen in dark places in urban areas of Tehran. As discussed by Purvis (2008), lighting may help to keep potential vandals away from properties because they can be seen easily in the brightness of the light and it can provide legitimate users a sense of security and well being.

Furthermore, darkening the area is known as the least effective measure to tackle vandalism by respondents. It consistently supports the finding that "dark places are more vulnerable to vandalism and graffiti" in urban areas of Tehran.

The studied SCP variables were subjected to factor analysis to categorise the variables and to identify the variables of greatest influence on graffiti vandalism occurrence. Factor analysis rated "risk of committing crime" and "physical condition of property" as the most influential factor categories on graffiti vandalism occurrence. "Attraction of the target" (including lighting level) was rated as the lowest influential factor category on graffiti vandalism occurrence.

The results indicate that in comparison to other SCP variables, lighting level is not as influential as other studied variables in graffiti vandalism occurrence in urban areas of Tehran. It shows implementing lighting initiatives to prevent graffiti vandalism would not be as effective as implementing other studied SCP initiatives to combat graffiti vandalism. As a result, graffiti vandalism prevention strategies should be directed at levels of formal and informal surveillance (risk of committing crime) and physical condition of property which are known as the most influential SCP variables on graffiti vandalism occurrence in urban areas of Tehran.

The investigation on how the studied SCP variables contribute to high degree graffiti damages in urban areas of Tehran, revealed that of all studied SCP variables, only six variables correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran. The presence of graffiti vandalism on vandalised property, the maintenance level of the property, the quality of the building (construction), the quality of the building (design and the harmony with the environment) which categorised as the physical condition of the property, size of vandalised facade (availability of the target to graffiti writers) and glossiness of the vandalised facade (attraction of the target to graffiti writers) known as SCP variables correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran. Lighting level was not known as SCP variable that correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages.

The study concludes that although dark areas are more vulnerable to graffiti vandalism damages; however, lighting level is neither one of the most influential SCP variable in graffiti vandalism occurrence in urban areas of Tehran nor it is correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages. Lighting is necessary to increase perception of safety among respondents and well lighted areas are less vulnerable to graffiti vandalism but there are more influential SCP variables than lighting level which can be implemented to prevent high degree graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran.

The results also indicate that there is no correlation between types of building, block design, land use of the property, types of street and degree of graffiti vandalism damages.

To answer the research questions and to achieve the aim of the study, the findings of the study are summarised as,

- Occurrence of three common types of vandalism damages in Tehran namely, damages to vehicles (cars, motor bikes and bicycles), damages to public properties in neighbourhood and damages to landscape and green areas in neighbourhood is a concern to teenage students and also can affect on respondents' perception of safety in urban areas of Tehran

- Lighting is necessary to increase perception of safety among respondents and vandalism and graffiti are more likely to happen in dark places in urban areas of Tehran

- Only six variables correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran. The presence of graffiti vandalism on vandalised property, the maintenance level of the property, the quality of the building (construction), the quality of the building (design and the harmony with the environment) which categorised as the physical condition of the property, size of vandalised facade (availability of the target to graffiti writers) and glossiness of the vandalised facade (attraction of the target to graffiti writers) known as SCP variables correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran and there is no correlation between types of building, block design, land use of the property, types of street and degree of graffiti vandalism damages.

6.3 Outcome of the research

With the fast development of the city and increasing interest to reconstruct and renovate old structures of the city, there is an urgent need to adopt new environmental strategies to tackle graffiti vandalism in Tehran as well as to improve perception of safety among residents in urban areas of Tehran. Moreover, architects and designers should be trained to implement effective SCP strategies in their new designs.

Preventing three common types of vandalism and graffiti in urban areas of Tehran will help to improve perception of safety among teenage students.

To prevent high degree of graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran, it is necessary to rapidly repair the vandalised properties. In line with Tehran municipality's activities to tackle graffiti vandalism, there is an inevitable requirement to increase a sense of responsibility among Tehran residents and to encourage the owners to do a

better maintenance of the buildings and to quickly repair graffiti vandalism damages on properties. Moreover, Tehran municipality needs to have more control on building designs and physical condition of properties to be consistent with social, cultural values and in harmony with the city urban environment. Improving the outdoor lighting level in urban areas of Tehran will help both to improve perception of safety among respondents and to prevent graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran.

The conclusions derived from the study help policy makers in developing new strategies and appropriate countermeasures to decrease incidence of none political graffiti vandalism as well as to improve residents' perception of safety in urban areas.

6.4 Research Overview

The research findings have addressed all the original stated research objectives. The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To explore the teenage students' perception of safety in relation to non-political graffiti vandalism with reference to outdoor lighting levels in urban areas of Tehran, Iran.

- To assess the related SCP variables known to impact on vandalism and graffiti occurrence, as well as to evaluate the environmental variables that correlate with the high degree of non-political graffiti vandalism damages.

6.5 Significant contribution to knowledge

This dissertation has made an original contribution to the literature by investigating the actual effects of lighting level on non political graffiti vandalism occurrences in urban areas of Tehran as well as to identify the SCP and urban environmental variables correlated with high degree of non- political graffiti vandalism occurrence. Vandalism prevention literature points to two basic thoughts regarding lighting level and vandalism prevention (Purvis, 2008): lighting vs. no lighting' that have been discussed in chapter 3 of the present research. Although both theories showed positive effects but lack of scientific evaluations on the effects of improved outdoor lighting or darkness on vandalism occurrence, lack of information on the existing lighting level and the lighting level after intervention, combination of improved lighting with other crime control measures such as target hardening or formal surveillance indicated to the need for more balanced and holistic investigation on the actual effects of outdoor lighting on graffiti vandalism occurrence. Moreover, both theories should be studied in urban environment considering the effects of either low or high level of lighting on people's perception of safety as well as prevention of other types of crime that might be different with school campus experiments. The possibility of darkening the urban areas or excessive use of light in the cities to prevent vandalism and graffiti (considering the economical, environmental and social effects of lighting on societies) and the effects of lighting interventions on different age groups and communities with different social and cultural values should be considered.

This study took a fresh look at the actual effects non-political graffiti vandalism occurrence on respondents' perception of safety, the effects of lighting level on graffiti vandalism occurrence as well as to determine on SCP and urban environmental

variables that are correlated with high degree of graffiti vandalism damages in urban areas of Tehran.

This research is thus important because there is no other known study about the effectiveness of implementing environmental strategies to prevent crimes such as vandalism and graffiti in Iran.

6.6 Suggestions for future studies

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

- To study the effects of outdoor lighting and other related SCP variables from the view of all residents in Tehran and other developing nations
- To study the cost benefits effects of implementing the studied SCP variables in Tehran and other developing nations
- Future research could built upon the principles put forward in this study to look at the effects of outdoor lighting on other specific types of crime in different communities
- Future research must probe the magnitude of graffiti vandalism occurrence in Tehran urban areas

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