

# Opportunity Approach and Trait Approach: Focusing on the UK and the US Theories and Research

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## 차 례

- I. Introduction
- II. Theoretical Evolution of the Risk of Criminal Victimization
- III. Empirical Support for the Opportunity and Trait Approaches to Different Types of Victimization Risks
- IV. Which Approach Better Explains the Risk of Criminal Victimization?
- V. Conclusion

## I . Introduction

In the field of victimology, researchers have developed the opportunity approach (eg, lifestyle—routine activities) and trait approach (eg, low self-control) that developed in Western countries, especially in the UK and the US to explain and predict the risk of criminal victimization. The opportunity approach explains how opportunities for victimization are created whereas the trait approach explains how individuals' traits lead them to an increased risk of victimization. Researchers have tested the two theoretical approaches. They also have integrated and expanded them to

improve our understanding of the risk of victimization.

In this paper we compared the two approaches by focusing on the UK and the US victimology research. First, we will review the theoretical evolution of the risk of criminal victimization. Second, we will assess the empirical support for the opportunity approach and trait approach to explaining and predicting risk of criminal victimization. Finally, we will discuss which of these two approaches, if either, or perhaps both approaches simultaneously ‘best’ explains and predicts the risk of criminal victimization. To compare between the two approaches we will state what my criterion/criteria for “best” is/are and how we assessed what is “best” across past studies. In addition, we will discuss the research methodology and integrate the findings from past research studies to build and support our answers.

## II. Theoretical Evolution of the Risk of Criminal Victimization

### II. i . The Trait Approach

In the past, victims were regarded as people who were damaged unilaterally. However, the perspective that victims play a role in resulting in a crime due to their characteristics emerged. For example, some people become victims of rape because they are women and some people become victims of assault because they are physically weak. Hans von Hentig (1948) studied what made someone a victim, and argued that some individual characteristics which caused crime made the individual a victim. Thus, he underscored that both victims and criminals should be considered

in explaining the occurrence of crime. He suggested that criminal victims came under 13 categories based on the propensity of victims: (1) young, (2) females, (3) old, (4) immigrants, (5) depressed, (6) mentally defective/deranged, (7) the acquisitive, (8) dull normal, (9) minorities, (10) wanton, (11) the lonesome and heartbroken, (12) tormentor, and (13) the blocked, exempted, and fighting. He explained that they became targets due to their characteristics. For example, the young and the old are more likely to be victimized due to their risk-taking and ignorance. Also, females are more likely to be victimized due to their suitability for sexual assaults.

Mendelsohn who is called as “father of victimology” developed the term, “victimology” and focused on the relationship between victims and offenders. Mendelsohn (1956) found that victims and offenders were often familiar with each other through interviewing victims, witnesses, and bystanders. Then he classified victims into six categories based on their culpability: (1) completely innocent victim, (2) victim with minor guilt, (3) victim as guilty as offender/voluntary victim, (4) victim more guilty than offender, (5) most guilty victim, and (6) imaginary victim.

Schafer (1968) also suggested the concept of victim typology as Von Hentig and Mendelsohn did. He classified victims into seven categories borrowing both Von Hentig's classification according to individual characteristics and Mendelshon's classification according to individual behaviors: (1) unrelated victims— no responsibility, (2) provocative victims— share responsibility, (3) precipitative victims— some degree of responsibility, (4) biologically weak victims— no responsibility, (5) socially weak victims— no responsibility, (6) self-victimizing— total responsibility, and (7) political victims— no responsibility. His classification showed the degree to which victims are responsible for their victimizations.

Schreck (1999) argued that victims and offenders have similar characteristics, and developed self-control model to explain the influence of victims' characteristics (i.e., low self-control) on victimization. For the model, he reformulated self-control theory to be applied to victims, and connect low self-control with vulnerability. He suggested the six elements of low self-control: (1) future orientation, (2) empathy, (3) tolerance for frustration, (4) diligence, (5) preference for mental rather than physical activity, and (6) risk avoidance. He also proposed that individuals with a low level of self-control have a higher risk of victimization (i.e., both personal and property victimization). Individuals with low self-control often result in the greater vulnerability. For example, individuals with low self-control become suitable targets by making themselves into antagonists. Also, the individuals expose themselves to circumstances with risk and without guardianship. Schreck, Wright, and Miller (2002) suggested that both individual traits (i.e., low self-control, weak social ties with family and school, and delinquent peers) and the measures of lifestyle-routine activity theory (LRAT) should be considered together to understand the sources of the risk of victimization, and developed a causal model for explaining violent victimization. In the model, self-control influences victimization directly or through family and school bonds, delinquent peers, and risky lifestyles. Also, family and school bonds and delinquent peers influence victimization directly or through risky lifestyles.

## II. ii. The Opportunity Approach

Original Opportunity Theory: Then the perspective that criminal victimization occurs not due to individual traits, but due to criminal opportunity emerged. Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo (1978) developed the lifestyle-exposure theory, which was one of the first

systematic theories of criminal victimization. The basic assumption of the lifestyle-exposure theory is that demographic differences in the likelihood of personal victimization are caused by differences in the personal lifestyles of victims. Variations in lifestyles lead to the differential exposure to dangerous places, times, and so on. For example, men have more possibility to be victims than women because they went to bars more often. Thus, an individual's lifestyle is one of the important factors that determine the risk of criminal victimization. In lifestyle-exposure theory, the unit of analysis is basically an individual. However, the unit of analysis can be enlarged to a household.

Cohen and Felson (1979) developed routine activities theory (RAT) to explain unusually high crime rates in spite of economic success in the U.S. during 1960–1970. They posit that criminal victimization occurs with the convergence of motivated offender, suitable target, and absence of guardianship in time and space. Criminal victimizations under the premise of RAT are limited to direct-contact predatory victimizations. According to Cohen and Felson (1979), the change of routine daily activities during the time period directly impacted the convergence of the three components. Cohen and Felson (1979) argued that the changes of people's routine activities (ie, expanded outside activities) increased their risk of victimization, and made their houses more attractive targets. Also, changes of routine activities in production influenced the rise of crime. Small-sized, light-weighted, and valuable consumer products increased their target suitability. Thus, the prosperous society could increase criminal victimizations rather than decrease them.

**Integration of Lifestyle-Exposure and Routine Activities Theories:** Cohen, Kluegel, and Land (1981) developed the opportunity model that integrated both routine activities theory and lifestyle-exposure theory to explain individual-level predatory victimization. Lifestyle-routine activity

approach has been derived from their study (Madero-Hernandez & Fisher, 2012). They considered exposure to motivated offender, proximity to motivated offender, target attractiveness, and guardianship as the elements of criminal opportunity which mediated social inequality and predatory victimization risk in their study. Based on Cohen et al.'s model (1981), Miethe and Meier (1994) also argued that the two theories of routine activity and lifestyle-exposure should be integrated. They designated proximity, exposure, attractiveness, and guardianship as victim characteristics providing criminal opportunity. Based on the victim characteristics, they suggested the heuristic model of criminal events in which the victim characteristics causes criminal events (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, auto theft, and larceny-theft) directly or through social context (eg, the physical location, the interpersonal relationship, and the behavioral setting).

Age-Graded Routine Activities Theory: Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) criticized that the existing LRAT could not explain youth victimization (e.g., sexual assault and parental assault). Also, Henson, Wilcox, Reynolds, and Cullen (2010) argued that criminal opportunity is important for predicting victimization in every life course, but the opportunity is not connected with routine activities at the same degree in every life course. For example, adults who spend more time in electronic activities may not have more possibility to become victims than adults who spend little time in electronic activities whereas youths who spend more time in electronic activities have more possibility to become victims than youths who spend little time in electronic activities. To explain youth victimization, Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) suggested adding target congruence (ie, target vulnerability, target gratifiability, and target antagonism) in opportunity structure of existing LRAT (ie, proximity, exposure, and guardianship). According to them, target congruence is based on the offenders' views and

becomes varied among different offenders.

Feminist Routine Activities Theory: Schwartz and Pitts (1995) combined feminist theory with RAT to compensate for the difficulty for RAT to be applied to sexual violence. In sexual violence victimization, RAT did not explain what makes an offender attracted to a particular target. However, the combination made it possible to explain the attraction mechanism. For example, RAT can predict that vulnerable women are more likely to be sexually victimized. However, RAT itself cannot explain why there are many sexually predatory men on campus. Adding feminist theory to RAT made it possible to explain the social context where females are regarded as subordinates of males (Smith, 1990). Also, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) stressed that although feminists argued that sexual assaults increased due to rape-supportive culture, all females did not get the same level of the risk of sexual assault victimization. Thus, they argued that sexual assault victimization could be better explained by combining both feminist perspective and LRAT.

Gendered Routine Activities Theory: Wilcox, Tillyer, and Fisher (2009) argued that the risk of school-based adolescent victimization (eg, theft and assault) was different among students with a different gender unlike the existing LRAT research findings. For example, middle or high school female students' behaviors when exposed to peers might make more risk of victimization compared to male students' behaviors. Also, Popp and Peguero (2011) pointed out that although gender might make gender-specific relationships with different kinds of victimizations (eg, violent victimization and property victimization) by influencing an individual's daily routine, RAT did not consider the role of gender in victimization sufficiently. Wilcox et al.'s (2009) and Popp and Peguero's (2011) research emphasized that opportunity does not simply mediate gender effect on victimization, but it should also be able to moderate the

gender effect.

Cyberlifestyle–Routine Activities Theory: Eck and Clarke (2003) extended the concept of place into a system or network, such as mail and telecommunication. By using the extended concept of place, Reynolds, Henson, and Fisher (2011) expanded LRAT to online victimization. They operationalized core concepts of LRAT (ie, exposure, proximity, target attractiveness, and guardianship) regarding online victimization. For example, they examined time spent on online activities per day for measuring online exposure to crime, whether the respondents permit strangers to connect to their social networks for assessing online proximity to motivated offender, whether the respondents use online profile trackers to check visitors of their social networks for detecting guardianship, and whether the respondents post sexual orientation for determining target attractiveness. Then they tested the influence of LRAT on cyberstalking victimization.

### **III. Empirical Support for the Opportunity and Trait Approaches to Different Types of Victimization Risks**

#### **III. i . Empirical Support for the Opportunity Approach and Its Expansion**

From the 1970s, the perspective that criminal victimization occurs not due to individual traits, but due to criminal opportunity emerged. Hindelang et al. (1978) developed the lifestyle–exposure theory, which assumes that demographic differences in the likelihood of personal victimization are

caused by differences in the personal lifestyles of victims. Cohen and Felson (1979) developed routine activities theory, which assumes that criminal victimization occurs with the convergence of motivated offender, suitable target, and absence of guardianship in time and space. Then, Cohen et al. (1981) designed the opportunity model by combining routine activities theory with lifestyle-exposure theory to explain individual-level predatory victimization. Then, several expansions of the opportunity approach have been developed to explain various types of victimizations. The expansions include age-grade routine activities theory (Finkelhor & Asdigian 1996), feminist routine activities theory (Schwartz & Pitts 1995), gendered routine activities theory (Wilcox et al. 2009), and cyberlifesyle-routine activities theory (Reyns et al. 2011).

Empirical research has shown supports for the opportunity approach. Such research has revealed that the opportunity approach explains property victimization well. For example, lifestyle-routine activity variables influenced burglary victimization (Cohen et al. 1981; Lynch & Cantor 1992; Tseloni & Farrell 2002; Tseloni, Wittebrood, & Pease 2004) and household larceny (Lynch & Cantor 1992). Also, the variables influenced personal larceny (Cohen et al. 1981), theft (Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu 1998; Massey, Krohn, & Bonati 1989; Mustaine & Tewksbury 1998), and vehicle theft (Kennedy & Forde 1990). The influence of LRAT variables on property victimization was confirmed in college settings (Fisher et al. 1998; Mustaine & Tewksbury 2002) and in various countries (Tseloni et al. 2004; Tseloni & Farrell 2002).

Research has also shown that the opportunity approach explains violent victimization well. For example, lifestyle-routine activity variables have been found to be influential on personal violence and personal violence by strangers (Kenneydy & Forde 1990; Sampson 1987; Sampson & Lauritsen 1990; Tseloni 2000). Also, the variables influenced robbery (Kennedy &

Forde 1990) and sexual assault (Cass 2007; Mustaine & Tewksbury 2002). The influence of the variables on violent victimization was confirmed in college settings (Cass 2007; Fisher et al. 1998; Mustaine & Tewksbury 2002).

The expansions of opportunity theory have been supported by research. First, for age-grade RAT, Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) found that both target congruence variables and lifestyle variables explained youth victimization (i.e., nonfamily assault, sexual assault, and parental assault). Also, Henson et al. (2010) discovered that criminal opportunity might be different according to age because risky activities in adolescent lifestyle influenced criminal victimization less severely compared to risky activities in adult lifestyle. Second, for gendered RAT, Wilcox et al. (2009) found that the influence of lifestyle-routine activity variables on theft victimization and assault victimization was gendered in a 7th grade student sample. Also, Popp and Peguero (2011) discovered that the influence of extracurricular routine activities on victimization was gendered in a 10th grade student sample.

Third, for feminist RAT, Schwartz and Pitts (1995) found that females who drank a lot and females with many friends who used alcohol to engage in sexual activities, had higher risk of sexual assault victimization in a college student sample. The findings indicated that sexual victimization mostly occurred among college students not because females were vulnerable, but because male attitudes toward sexual predation had not been changed. Also, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) reaffirmed the findings of Schwartz and Pitts. That is, they discovered that females who were often exposed to rape-supportive male peer groups had a higher risk of sexual assault victimization. Finally, for cyber RAT, Reyns et al. (2011) found that cyberlifestyle-routine activity variables influenced cyberstalking victimization. Also, Reyns et al. (2013) discovered that participation in

sexting, which is a cyberlife style—routine activity increased cyber sexual victimization.

### **III. ii . Empirical Support for the Trait Approach**

In the past, victims were conceived to be unilaterally damaged. However, the perspective emerged that victims' characteristics contribute to their crime victimization (Han von Hentig, 1948; Mendelsohn, 1956; Schafer, 1968). Hans von Hentig (1948) grouped criminal victims into 13 categories according to their personal characteristics. (eg, young, females). Then, Mendelsohn (1956) used culpability of victims in classifying victims into six categories (e.g., completely innocent victim, victim with minor guilt). Schafer (1968) utilized the two criteria of individual characteristics and personal behaviors (eg, unrelated victims, provocative victims) for categorizing crime victims as used by Von Hentig and Mendelsohn, respectively. Relatively recently, Schreck (1999) argued that low self-control should be used as a predictor for individuals' victimization risk.

Empirical research has supported the trait approach. Various research has shown that individual traits significantly influence individuals' victimization. The first empirical test for the influence of individuals' traits on victimization was conducted by Wolfgang (1958). He tested victim precipitation. He examined 558 homicides that occurred in Philadelphia from 1948 to 1952. He found that victims precipitated offenders by inflicting the first attack in 26% of the homicides. Later Amir (1971) examined rape incidents that occurred in Philadelphia from 1958 to 1960. In the examination, he checked to what extent victims precipitated their rape victimizations. His findings showed that approximately 20% of the rapes were victim-precipitated incidents. He argued that the

victim-precipitated rapes were related with alcohol and likely to occur due to victims' seductive behaviors. He also mentioned that the victims had bad reputations in the victim-precipitated rapes.

Schreck (1999) tested the relationship between low self-control and both property and violent victimization by using the 1996 Tucson Youth Project survey. He found that low self-control significantly influenced property and violent victimization. Then, the influences of low self-control on various kinds of victimization have been tested by other researchers. Research showed that low self-control could explain the variation in property victimization (Franklin et al. 2012; Schreck et al. 2006) and personal victimization (Franklin et al. 2012; Schreck et al. 2002; Schreck et al., 2006). In addition, it was suggested that low self-control could explain victimizations that the opportunity approach did not explain well. That is, it could explain intimate partner victimization (Kerley, Xu, & Sirisunyaluck., 2008), sexual assault (Franklin 2011; Franklin, Franklin, Nobles, & Kercher 2012), stalking (Fox, Gover, & Kaukinen 2009), internet victimization (Reisig, Pratt, & Holtfreter 2009; Reyns, Burek, Henson, & Fisher 2013), and fraud victimization (Holtfreter, Reisig, & Pratt 2008).

#### IV. Which Approach Better Explains the Risk of Criminal Victimization?

There are many criteria to evaluate criminological theories (Spano & Freilich 2009). First, empirical validity of theory can be one of the criteria (Akers & Sellers 2004). Because both opportunity approach and trait approach are used to explain criminal victimization, the key concepts should be able to predict victimization (Spano & Freilich 2009). Second,

the extent to which a theory explains criminal victimization can be another criterion. Criminological theories should be able to explain as many criminal victimizations as possible because theories are generalizations of certain phenomena (eg, criminal victimization). We used the two criteria to evaluate both approaches.

For the evaluation, several processes are necessary. First, past studies on testing the two approaches should be selected to be reviewed. For this review, we used "Crime Prevention Reading List: Updated May 2013" from the School of Criminal Justice at University of Cincinnati. The reading list was made to give information on reading materials for PhD students to prepare a comprehensive exam. The reading list is very important for this research because most of influential studies are listed there. Hence, we tried to find past studies on testing the two approaches. Reading the prior studies, we tried to find other influential research in the literature review parts of the studies. As a result, we gathered approximately 30 studies on testing the two approaches. Among them, we removed some studies that did not clearly show whether indicators measured the key concepts from this research. In the end, we selected 20 studies to review. Second, key concepts of each approach should be designated. Hence, we designated the four key concepts of lifestyle–routine activities theory (ie, exposure to motivated offender, proximity to motivated offender, target attractiveness, and guardianship) as the key concepts of opportunity approach, because lifestyle–routine activities theory is a representative and most frequently tested opportunity theory. Also, we designated the concept of low self–control as the key concept of trait approach because low self–control theory is a representative and most tested trait theory. Finally, the effects of each key concept on various kinds of victimization should be analyzed. For the analysis, we extracted the effects of each key concept on victimization from each study. We found 416 measures for key concepts

from the 20 studies. Among them, there were 101 measures for exposure to motivated offender, 79 measures for proximity to motivated offender, 61 measures for target attractiveness, 164 measures for guardianship, and 11 measures for low self-control. Table 1 shows the effects of key concepts of opportunity and trait approach on various kinds of victimization.

Table 1 provides much information about the effects of opportunity and trait approaches on victimization. First, opportunity approach has a predictive power for property, violence, and cyber victimization. 56% of measures of exposure to motivated offender significantly influenced property victimization. 66% of measures of exposure to motivated offender significantly influenced violent victimization. 57% of measures of exposure to motivated offender, and 67% of measures of guardianship significantly influenced cyber victimization. However, opportunity approach has little or no predictive power for sexual victimization, stalking, and fraud victimization. For sexual victimization, measures of any key concept of opportunity approach did not significantly influence it. For stalking, there was no empirical study for testing the efficacy of lifestyle-routine activities theory for stalking victimization. For fraud, any key concepts of lifestyle-routine activities theory do not have predictive power. Second, trait approach has a predictive power for all kinds of victimization. That is, 100% measures of low self-control significantly influenced property, violent, sexual, stalking, and fraud victimization. Also, 50% measures of low self-control significantly influenced cyber victimization.

Table 1 Effects of Key Concepts of Opportunity and Trait Approaches on Victimization

	Opportunity								Trait							
	Exposure		Proximity		Attractiveness		Guardianship		Low Self-Control							
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N						
Property	13	10	6	7	10	13	25	65	2	0						
	(56%)		(46%)		(43%)		(28%)		(100%)							
Violent	10	5	1	1	2	5	13	54	3	0						
	(66%)		(50%)		(29%)		(19%)		(100%)							
Sexual Victimization	21	37	16	47	5	20	0	3	1	0						
	(36%)		(25%)		(25%)		(0%)		(100%)							
Stalking									2	0						
									(100%)							
Cyber Victimization	4	3	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	1						
	(57%)		(33%)		(40%)		(67%)		(50%)							
Fraud					0	1	0	1	1	0						
					(0%)		(0%)		(100%)							

Y: Significant effect, N: Non-significant effect, ( ): Percentage of indicators with significant effects per all used indicators

Third, among the key concepts of lifestyle–routine activities theory, exposure to motivated offender relatively well explains various kinds of victimization. Over 50% of measures of the key concepts significantly influenced each property, violent, and cyber victimization. However, other three key concepts do not well explain various kinds of victimization. The degree to which over 50% of measures of them significantly influenced each victimization was very low. Fourth, the number of measures of low self-control was relatively few. The number of measures of key concepts

was very few for stalking and fraud victimization. The analysis seems to show that low self-control can explain more various kinds of victimization and better explains and predicts the victimization than the key concepts of opportunity approach. However, since the number of measures of low self-control is too small, it is not easy to say that low self-control better explains and predicts the risk of criminal victimization. Also, the analysis may indicate that the integration between opportunity and trait approaches can better explain victimization because some victimization (eg, sexual and fraud victimization) is better explained by trait approach, and some victimization (eg, cyber victimization) is better explained by opportunity approach.

Hence, we argue that the integration of the two approaches (Schreck et al., 2002, 2006; Schreck & Fisher, 2004) may best explain the risk of criminal victimization compared to separate explanations from the two approaches. The reason is that each of the two approaches explains victimization independently (Franklin et al. 2012; Schreck et al. 2002, 2006; Schreck & Fisher 2004). Hence, one of the two approaches is incomplete to explain victimization, and the integration of the two approaches better explains victimization. (Schreck et al. 2002). These arguments are confirmed in several points. First, the integration of the two approaches can explain more kinds of victimizations compared to each of the two approaches. That is, after self-control was introduced as a predictor of victimization by Schreck (1999), the integration model (Schreck et al. 2002) considering individual traits (eg, self-control and family attachment) and LRAT concepts altogether was developed. Then, the integration model has explained a wider scope of criminal victimization. The integration model could explain property victimization (Franklin et al. 2012; Schreck et al. 2006) and personal victimization (Franklin et al. 2012; Schreck et al. 2002 & 2006). In addition, the model could explain

victimizations that the opportunity approach did not explain well. Such victimizations include intimate partner victimization (Kerley et al. 2008), sexual assault (Franklin 2011; Franklin et al. 2012), stalking (Fox et al. 2009), internet victimization (Reisig et al. 2009; Reyns et al. 2013), and fraud victimization (Holtfreter et al. 2008). Second, unlike the opportunity approach, the integration model can defend the criticism of feminist scholars who argue that general theories cannot explain violence against women due to the special nature of the victimization. The integration model can explain violence against women because individual traits (eg, self-control) and situational factors can explain women's target suitability (Franklin et al. 2012). Finally, unlike the opportunity approach, the integration model can easily explain repeat victimization. That is, repeat victimization can be explained by the model in the sense that low self-control at one point becomes an important predictor of victimization at the other point, and low self-control continues for a long time (Schreck et al. 2006). For example, individuals with low self-control continue to do activities of victimization risk after suffering damages from the activities. Thus, the individuals are victimized repeatedly.

## V. Conclusion

This study compared trait approach and opportunity approach to explain victimization by focusing on the US and the UK research. Empirical evidence proves that both trait approach and opportunity approach well explain victimization. Much research supports both approaches. Analysis of the effects of key concepts on victimization seems to show that trait approach better explains victimization compared to opportunity approach. The key concepts of trait approach explained more kinds of victimization

than those of opportunity approach. Also, the key concepts of trait approach better explained victimization than those of opportunity approach. However, neither trait approach or opportunity approach explained all victimizations completely. Each approach explained some victimizations independently.

The study provides an important point for victimization research. The results indicate that the integration of the two approaches can better explain victimization than only one of the two. It means that considering both approaches together can be more effective than focusing on only one approach to prevent victimization. In connection with that, trials to integrate several theories to overcome limitations of a theory can be a guide for integration of the two approaches. For example, structural-choice theory was developed to overcome limitations of focus on either micro or macro-level by routine activities theory (Miethe & Meier 1990; Meier & Miethe 1993). Miethe and Meier developed the structural-choice theory through combining the concepts from the two major theories (lifestyle-exposure theory and routine activities theories), such as physical proximity to motivated offenders, exposure to high-risk environments, target attractiveness, and the absence of guardianship (Meier & Miethe 1993). In the structural-choice theory, proximity and exposure are macro-levels whereas target attractiveness and guardianship are micro-levels.

Another example is situated transaction developed by Luckenbille (1977). Luckenbille (1977) argued that crimes are caused by many transactions between offenders and victims not by one-sided behaviors from either offenders or victims. The situated transaction theory is to integrate main criminology theories that attribute cause of crime to offenders and victim precipitation that attributes cause of crime to victims.

Like every other research the study has some limitations. The number

of research on key concepts of trait approach was relatively small. Also, the number of research on some key concepts of opportunity approach was relatively small. The small number of research may slightly decrease the validity and reliability of this study. However, we believe that the small number of research did not influence the results because every reference research for the analysis is credible peer-reviewed paper that published in famous journals.

Future research needs to examine how better integration of the two approaches explain than each approach. It will make us more deeply understand which factors bring about victimization. Also, it will help us prevent victimization more effectively.

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Abstract

## **Opportunity Approach and Trait Approach: Focusing on the UK and the US Theories and Research**

Lim, Hyungjin · Lee, Julak · Kim, Yongsok

This study compared opportunity approach with trait approach. Both approaches are the representative theoretical explanations for victimization developed in Western countries, especially in the UK and the US. For the ami, the study focused on the UK and the US. First, the study showed the evolution of opportunity approach and trait approach by explaining various opportunity theories and trait theories. Also, the study examined how well opportunity approach and trait approach are empirically supported by previous research. The results showed that both approaches are supported by previous research. Finally, the study examined which approaches better explained victimization between opportunity approach and trait approach. For the purpose, the core concepts of lifestyle-routine activities theory that is a representative theory in opportunity approach and the core concepts of low self-control theory that is a representative theory in trait approach were compared. The findings showed that either opportunity approach or trait approach could not completely explain victimization. The findings might indicate that the integration of the two approaches is needed.

**Key Words:** victimology, opportunity approach, trait approach, lifestyle-routine activities theory, low self-control theory

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