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The Determinants of Information-Seeking Behavior Regarding Burglary and the Information Channels Used

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Abstract

This research was aimed at gaining insight into people's information-seeking behavior regarding the individual risk of burglary. In order to achieve that, the determinants of risk information-seeking behavior were examined and the role of the new media, especially the Internet, was investigated. Based on the Framework of Risk Information-Seeking (FRIS), the determinants risk perception, personal involvement and self-efficacy were chosen. In addition, further literature review resulted in including response efficacy as a fourth determinant. Furthermore, some interactive relations between those constructs and information-seeking behavior were investigated.

By means of an online survey consisting of already existing scales, the hypotheses were tested. This analysis revealed that there was a significant predictive effect of personal involvement and response efficacy on information-seeking behavior. Furthermore, the results showed that the participants would use the Internet significantly more often than all other information channels such as newspapers or television. However, the research revealed nonsignificant main effects of risk perception, self-efficacy and a nonsignificant interaction effect of response efficacy and risk perception on information-seeking behavior. Moreover, the proposed mediation effect of self-efficacy on the relation between personal involvement and information-seeking behavior was not significant either. Finally, there was no significantly higher rate of self-efficacy in the group that uses the Internet most often than in the other groups.

However, the research revealed some practical implications. As it showed that most participants would use the Internet most often as a risk information channel it supports the police and other official institutions in their effort of informing people via the Internet. This was also perceived to be effective by the participants. Furthermore, the high average rate of self-efficacy showed that the participants perceived themselves to be able to handle the risks of burglary adequately. This would fit the shift of responsibility of the government to individuals very well. However, this was a personal estimation and might therefore not be highly reliable. Thus, it is important to further explore this. Furthermore, with some changes such as measuring actual self-efficacy and information-seeking behavior, this study could be reproduced to gain even more insight in people's information-seeking behavior.

Samenvatting

Het doel van dit onderzoek was om inzicht te krijgen in het informatiezoekgedrag met betrekking tot het individuele risico van inbraak. Om dit te bereiken werden de determinanten van informatiozoekgedrag en de rol van de nieuwe media, met name het Internet, onderzocht. Op basis van het Framework of Risk Information-Seeking (FRIS) werden de determinanten risicoperceptie, betrokkenheid en self-efficacy gekozen. Bovendien werd op basis van verdere literatuur response efficacy als een vierde determinant bijgevoegd. Verder werden enkele interactieve relaties tussen deze constructen en informatiezoekgedrag onderzocht.

Met behulp van een online survey die al bestaande schalen inhield werden de hypothesen getoetst. Uit deze analyse bleek dat er een significant voorspellend effect van betrokkenheid en response efficacy op informatiezoekgedrag was. Verder lieten de resultaten zien dat de participanten het Internet significant meer gebruikten dan alle andere informatiekanalen zoals de krant of televisie. Echter, bleek uit het onderzoek dat er nonsignificante hoofdeffecten van risicoperceptie, self-efficacy en een nonsignificant interactie effect van response efficacy en risicoperceptie op informatiezoekgedrag was. Bovendien was het voorspelde mediatie effect van self-efficacy op de relatie tussen betrokkenheid en informatiezoekgedrag ook niet significant. Uiteindelijk was er geen significant hogere mate van self-efficacy in de groep te vinden die het Internet het meest gebruikt dan in de andere groepen.

Desondanks openbaarde het onderzoek sommige praktische implicaties. Door aan te tonen dat de participanten het Internet het meest zouden gebruiken als een risico informatiekanaal steunt het onderzoek de politie en andere officiële instanties in hun moeite om de mensen via het Internet te informeren. Dit werd door de participanten ook als effectief waargenomen. Verder liet de hoge mate van self-efficacy zien dat de participanten zichzelf in staat zien om adequaat met het risico van inbraak om te kunnen gaan. Dit zou goed bij de verschuiving van verantwoordelijkheid van de overheid naar individuen passen. Echter, was het een persoonlijke inschatting en zou daarom niet betrouwbaar kunnen zijn. Daarom is het belangrijk om dit verder te onderzoeken. Bovendien zou dit onderzoek met enkele veranderingen kunnen worden gereproduceerd om nog meer inzicht te krijgen in het informatiezoekgedrag. Hierbij zou dan bijvoorbeeld de daadwerkelijke mate van self-efficacy en informatiezoekgedrag kunnen worden gemeten.

Introduction

Burglary is a criminal act where people illegally get into the house of other people and take their ownings. This usually creates a bad feeling for the victims because other people were in their house and saw and took all of their valuable things. However, burglary does happen very often and there is a risk of burglary happening to anyone. The word "'risk' refers to the possibility of a harmful event" (Hendrickx, Vlek & Oppewal, 1989, p. 42) which in this case refers to the act of burglary. Within the Netherlands, 156,938 cases of burglary have been registered since November 2013 (Drimble, n.d.). Furthermore, 71,230 of them were committed in the year 2014 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2015). However, as there are 7.25 million apartments in the Netherlands (Verbond van Verzekeraars, 2013), the objective risk of burglary only is about 1 per cent per year. A study of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2014) shows that most of the Dutch people think that there is just a small probability that this would happen to them but 12 per cent of the respondents think that there is a high or even very high risk of burglary.

However, in the case of burglary, there are possibilities to reduce the risk and to thereby increase the personal safety. People can prevent their houses or flats from burglary by, for example, using a safety lock. Many of those actions which can be done to reduce the probability of burglary can be found, for example, on the Website of the Dutch police (Politie Nederland, n.d.). There they answer many questions regarding burglary so that people are informed about it and they can take action themselves. So, there are many possibilities to take action to improve safety. But to be able to actually do this people have to be motivated to search for this information and to put it into practice. However, this is not always the case because it is influenced by many factors.

Because of the constant risk of burglary, it is important for people to improve their safety and, thus, to search for information about it. Therefore, searching for information is a sort of a preventive action as it serves as a starting point of further preventive actions. In addition, the responsibility for their own safety transcends ever more to the individual persons (Van Caem, 2008). The police works together with the people to reduce criminal acts and, therefore, there is a shift of responsibility. People are reporting criminal acts and help the police in reducing them. Furthermore, they can actively protect themselves against such criminal acts. Thus, it is important for them to know how to behave adequately and how to improve their own personal safety.

However, there is only a small amount of research available yet which concentrates on the information-seeking behavior of people about their own risks and safety (Bouwmeester,

Franx, Holzmann, Gutteling, & De Vries, 2012). There are only a few models which provide determinants for information search behavior which are still not tested very often. An example of such a model is the Framework of Risk Information Seeking (FRIS) of Ter Huurne (2008) which will be described in detail in the following section. Furthermore, many studies about risk information-seeking behavior contain topics as crises that go for many people at the same time (e.g., Bouwmeester et al., 2012). However, burglary can happen to anyone at any time. Thus, it is more an individual threat that everybody has to deal with himself or herself. In contrast to crises, such as a natural catastrophe, there is no specific situation regarding burglary where it affects many people at the same time. Rather, it is an everyday risk and danger.

This shows that there is no sufficient knowledge about it yet but burglary is a threat to the physical and social safety of people. Therefore, it is important to understand how people perceive the risk and how they deal with it so that adequate adjustments can be done by, for example, the police to better inform the people. Thus, the purpose of this research is to further explore the information search behavior of people by means of some of the existing models. To achieve this, first some determinants of such behavior are tested and then the role of (new) media is examined. Thus, it will be investigated which media are mainly used to search for information about burglary and why people prefer this type of media.

Motives of Information-Seeking Behavior

The results of the literature analysis show that there are different reasons or motives why people search for information. The first is the notion of information need which means that by means of new information a particular purpose can be achieved (Derr, 1983). Thus, this causes people to search for this needed information. Furthermore, Fiske (1990) describes the gratification theory which states that people want to fulfill their needs by actively searching for information which supports the theory of information need mentioned above (as cited in Wilson, 1997). Thus, people search for information ambitiously and actively if they perceive an information gap.

Ter Huurne (2008) also describes several causes of information-seeking behavior. First, it is needed to reach different goals, such as decision-making. By means of information, a well-grounded decision can be made. Furthermore, the model of information search process states that if there is a lack of knowledge, people tend to seek information to fill in this gap (Kuhlthau, 1991). The model of risk information seeking and processing (RISP) defines the upper threshold of this gap as ‘information sufficiency’ (Griffin, Dunwoody & Neuwirth,

1999). Moreover, according to the information seeking theory, people search for information to reduce uncertainty (Ter Huurne, 2008). They want to have a "satisfying amount of certainty about topics in their environment" (Ter Huurne, 2008, p. 39) which means that people tend to search for information to be more certain and gain knowledge about the events happening in their environment. In addition, Bouwmeester et al. (2012) add social purposes to this list of motives. Thus, people sometimes search for information about, for example, interacting with others in an adequate way. Thus, there are many motives for information-seeking behavior in general. Now it is important to look at the factors that determine the information-seeking behavior related to social and physical safety and especially to the risk of burglary. In order to do that, the following research question is formulated:

Which factors determine information-seeking behavior regarding burglary and which information channel is mainly used for this?

Determinants of Information-Seeking Behavior regarding Risk and Safety

To be able to conduct this research about information search behavior related to safety, the Framework of Risk Information Seeking (FRIS) is chosen to be the framework (Ter Huurne, 2008). This model defines constructs that influence information search behavior. As Ter Huurne (2008) states, this framework "describes the importance of the public's information needs, risk perception, and self-efficacy as predictors of intended risk information-seeking behavior" (p. 37). There are a few studies concerning this framework which state that the three awareness factors defined by Ter Huurne (2008) (risk perception, personal involvement and self-efficacy) are determinants of information-seeking behavior. Therefore, this study focuses on those three factors which are further examined in the following subsections.

Risk Perception. Risk perception is defined as "an individual's biased assessment of a risky situation" (Cho & Lee, 2006, p. 114). Furthermore, Ter Huurne (2008) defines risk perception as the extent to which people perceive the probability of getting into a risky situation. Thus, those people have to think about the question whether there exists a risk. If people have a higher risk perception they tend to be more uncertain (Ter Huurne, 2008). This is supported by Cho and Lee (2006) who state that perceived risk consists of two dimensions, which are uncertainty and significance of the consequence. As described above, uncertainty stimulates information needs and therefore information-seeking behavior. Moreover, according to Pidgeon, Hood, Jones, Turner and Gibson (1992), risk perception includes opinions and judgments about a certain risky situation where fear is a possible consequence

(as cited in Van Schie, 2008). Thus, if people perceive a risk as high they get into an anxious state which they want to escape by solving this problem through searching for information (Cho & Lee, 2006).

Personal Involvement. According to Ter Huurne (2008), personal involvement shows the importance or relevance of a certain risk for people. Regarding the definition of risk mentioned above, this construct measures the extent to which people are aware that they possibly can become the victim of a harmful event. This is supported by the definition of Ter Huurne (2008) who further describes persons with high personal involvement as knowing that a certain risk can have negative consequences for them. Thus, personal involvement is related to the possible consequences a person might have because of the risky situation. Regarding burglary, these consequences could be, for example, having strangers in the house and losing valuable things. In addition, if a person is highly involved and interested in his or her environment, this person tends to be motivated to search for information about it (Johnson, 2005). Thus, people who view a certain risk as important and relevant for themselves want to reduce the probability of the negative consequences and therefore tend to search for information on how to reduce the risk. This is due to the protection motivation that is created by the fear that is perceived by realizing that one is vulnerable to a threat (Norman, Boer & Seydel, 2005).

Self-Efficacy. The definition of self-efficacy in general is the extent to which a person is convinced to be able to engage in a behavior to reach a certain goal (Zimmerman, 2000). This "strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations" (Bandura, 1978, p. 141). This definition is also reflected in Ter Huurne's (2008) own definition of self-efficacy which states that it is the "notion that the individual expects to be able to cope with risks adequately with the newly acquired information" (p. 40). Thus, if people feel that they are able to execute a certain behavior it is more likely that they will perform that behavior. So, according to Ter Huurne (2008), self-efficacy shows if people are convinced that they are able to cope with the risk.

However, to be able to do cope with the risk, it is important to have adequate information and knowledge on how to handle the risk. So, people have to search for information. If they are confident that they can cope with the risk and that they can take action to prevent it, they are likely to search information about that to be able to deal with the risk. Furthermore, according to Ter Huurne (2008), self-efficacy is important to actually engage in information-seeking behavior because people have to be confident to be able to "deal with the media and the information about the risks" (p. 40). This is supported by a study by

Zimmerman (2000) who examined the performance of students and who found that students who are highly self-efficacious engage in more difficult tasks. Moreover, self-efficacy influenced both the performance and the energy of students in those tasks positively. Thus, people with high self-efficacy engage in more difficult tasks and spend more energy in doing that.

Furthermore, self-efficacy itself has four determinants (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1979). The first is enactive mastery experiences which means that having accomplished a task and being convinced that this was due to their own ability increases people's self-efficacy. Second, vicarious learning or modeling influences self-efficacy. Thus, seeing a similar person performing a task improves the belief in the own success. Third, verbal persuasion by someone who is viewed as competent and reliable by people improves self-efficacy. Finally, psychological or physiological arousal can be a factor that motivates people to believe they are able to engage in a challenging task.

The Influence on Information-Seeking Behavior. Even though the FRIS actually states that all of those three concepts only have an indirect effect on information-seeking behavior (Ter Huurne, 2008), there are numerous studies that show that they are positively and directly related to information-seeking behavior in crisis situations. For example, the study by Ter Huurne and Gutteling (2008) about predictors of risk information-seeking shows that both personal involvement and risk perception influence the search for risk information positively. Furthermore, Kievik, Ter Huurne and Gutteling (2012) conducted two studies to test the FRIS relating to the risk of a fire accident and terrorism. The results of these studies also showed that higher involvement and higher risk perception motivates people to search for information. By referring to other studies, Kats (2013) states as well that a higher risk perception and higher self-efficacy determine information-seeking behavior.

Opportunities of New Media

After looking at the determinants of risk information-seeking behavior, it is important to get to know which channels are used to attain this information and why these channels are preferred. Due to the latest technological developments there are many channels available by which people can obtain information. Next to the traditional media, there is a large number of new media which can serve as information channels as well. By means of these new media, information is provided to everybody with Internet access all around the world and is available 24 hours a day (Bouwmeester et al., 2012). Dimmick, Chen and Li (2004) even state that "the Internet has become one of the most popular vehicles facilitating a variety of

communication and information-sharing tasks worldwide" (p. 19). Thus, the rise of the new media influences the use of the traditional media by taking their position.

The new media have different characteristics which distinguish them from the traditional media. First, according to Hüther (2005), they are digital, technological and networked. Thus, they play an important role in contemporary information and communication technology. Furthermore, because everybody can distribute messages freely, there is a freedom of censorship and the possibility of reaching everybody all around the world while having low costs of distribution (Dimmick et al., 2004). Third, the new media, especially the Internet, serve many functions as entertainment (Dimmick et al., 2004), education, communication (Hüther, 2005) and other social functions. This last aspect is mainly realized by the social media and its social networking sites. According to Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008), social media create virtual rooms where different people can interact publicly or privately and where they can "communicate, share, and discuss ideas" (p. 169).

Thus, the Internet is not only used for obtaining information. Rather, it is a multifunctional technology. Therefore, it attracts many people and gets their acceptance (Hüther, 2005). However, providing information is a very important role of the Internet as it offers information of any kind. Therefore, people can also find relevant risk information. Moreover, the Internet provides knowledge for the whole world with the only precondition of having access to it. According to Wolf and Peuke (2003), the biggest advantage of the Internet is that it offers the opportunity of proactive, independent and autonomous participation. Thus, it provides the possibility to actively search for information of any kind and is used frequently for that purpose.

The Role of the Internet as a Risk Information Channel

As the Internet is used that often for seeking information in general, it is interesting to have a further look at the importance of the Internet in the context of risk information-seeking. According to Wolf and Peuke (2003), the Internet is mainly used for information search in general and also for information about products in particular. Downloading software and sending messages are the second and third most often used functions of the Internet but there is a difference of almost 20 per cent between them and information search. Moreover, people who are searching for information do not use only one medium. However, the medium that is used the most and, thus, is the most important one is the Internet (Bouwmeester et al., 2012). The following ones are television, radio and personal contact but they are used significantly less frequently. This is valid for all of the studied risky situations.

Furthermore, as described above, the Internet is one of the most popular information media. The article of Bouwmeester et al. (2012) shows that the daily use of media influences the use of media in a crisis situation. Thus, as the Internet is so popular in general, it is likely that it also plays an important role in obtaining risk information. Moreover, Bouwmeester et al. (2012) state that search engines, websites of the government and news websites are used most often to search for information about a risky situation. In contrast to that, social media are used significantly less for obtaining risk information. This is supported by the study of Van Velsen, Beaujean, Van Gemert-Pijnen, Wentzel and Van Steenbergen (2012) about the use of the new media during the breakout of an infectious disease. The results showed that all participants used the Internet for obtaining information and most of them started with the search engine Google. This study also showed that the social media do not play an important role in risk information-seeking. Social media are rather used for other purposes**.** According to Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008), the overall purposes of social media are staying in contact with friends or getting to know new people. Thus, users do not perceive it as an information medium.

As already mentioned above, the new media influence the use of the traditional media. This is supported by Dimmick et al. (2004) who state that "the Internet has a competitive displacement effect on the traditional media in the daily news domain" (p. 27). They assume that the reason for this is reflected by the greater gratification opportunities of the new media. According to them, gratification opportunities reflect the beliefs whether a certain medium provides more satisfaction than another medium. By using the new media, the users have more control and more choices. This generates more satisfaction among the users and therefore encourages them in making use of the new media. In addition, it is easier to find information by using search engines which provide many different information sources after typing only a few search terms. As stated above, people have more control and can search independently and autonomously. They can decide themselves when and where to search and they can do it with their own initiative. Thus, it can be related to the mainly independent risk of burglary. As a conclusion it can be said that the Internet with its search engines is used more often as a means of information search than social media, traditional media or personal contact.

Quality of the Information. As stated above, the Internet provides more control to the user and there is the possibility of participation. However, as described above as well, the internet is free from censorship so that everybody has the opportunity to produce content which can be read all around the world. Because everyone is able to write something on the

Internet, not all of its content is reliable. If the Internet is the medium that is used most often for searching for information, the reliability of this information can also have an impact on the information-seeking behavior. There are reliable websites as, for example, the police website described above but there are also some others which are not. So, it is important to look at the impact of those factors on information seeking behavior.

The quality of the information on the Internet is determined by, for example, its reliability, completeness or accuracy (Aladwani & Palvia, 2002). This is supported by Nicolaou and McKnight (2006) who define perceived information quality as "cognitive beliefs about the favorable or unfavorable characteristics of the currency, accuracy, completeness, relevance, and reliability of the exchanged information" (p. 335). Furthermore, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) predicts that technology is rather accepted if it is easy to use and if it is useful (Lederer, Maupin, Sena & Zhuang, 2000). This model is built upon the theory of reasoned action which states that "beliefs influence attitudes which lead to intentions, and therefore generate behaviors" (p. 270). Thus, if people believe that the Internet provides useful and reliable information they are more motivated to actually engage in information-seeking behavior.

This is reflected in Witte's (1992) definition of response efficacy which is the expected benefit of the recommended behavior (as cited in Kats, 2013). There are some announcements of, for example, the police to make people search for relevant information and to protect themselves against burglary. But as described above, the quality of the information to be found on the Internet is controversial. Therefore if people believe that the risk information to be found is useful and reliable (and therefore benefits them), they tend to be more motivated to search for this information. This is supported by the study of De Jonge (2014) about different determinants of information-seeking behavior as the results show that response efficacy directly influences information-seeking behavior as a sort of self-protection. Thus, it is included as a fourth determinant in this study.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature review regarding the Framework of Risk Information Seeking (FRIS), the following hypotheses are formulated. Because high risk perception leads to negative and distressed emotions within people they want to escape those feelings by searching for information about the risk of burglary and about preventive actions that can be taken. Furthermore, people who view themselves as possible victims of the risk of burglary and therefore consider the possible negative consequences for them are motivated to search for

information on how to reject those consequences. Finally, self-efficacy is important in the context of burglary because there is the possibility of actively preventing burglary or at least reducing the risk of being a victim of burglary. If people feel able to deal with the media and the eventual advice about the preventive action, they are more motivated to search for information than if they are not convinced they will be able to do that. Therefore, the first three hypotheses are:

H1: There is a positive correlation between risk perception and information-seeking behavior where higher risk perception predicts information-seeking behavior.
H2: There is a positive correlation between personal involvement and information-seeking behavior where higher personal involvement predicts information-seeking behavior.
H3: There is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and information-seeking behavior where higher self-efficacy predicts information-seeking behavior.

Furthermore, the reviewed literature shows that realizing one's risk of becoming a victim of burglary and the possible negative consequences of that arouses fear. However, fear includes psychological and physiological arousal which determines the belief of being able to engage in preventive behavior to reduce the threat. Therefore, it is hypothesized the following:

H4: The relationship of personal involvement and information-seeking behavior is mediated by self-efficacy.

In addition, the literature review leads to the assumption that people who search for information about risks mainly use the Internet with its search engines and news websites for obtaining that information. One reason for this is that the Internet offers the opportunity of participation and independently acting. However, taking one's own initiative to seek further information and being able to deal with those media requires high self-efficacy. Furthermore, searching for information on the Internet implies the belief that this information is useful and reliable. However, as described above, people engage in information-seeking behavior if they believe that the threat is severe. Thus, if people believe that the threat of burglary is severe and if they believe that the information to be found is useful and reliable they tend to be even more motivated to search for information about it. Therefore, it is hypothesized the following:

H5: People use the Internet more often than the other information channels as a means of their information search.

H6: The average degree of self-efficacy will be higher in the group that mainly uses the Internet than in the group which chose another information channel.

H7: There is a positive correlation between response efficacy and information-seeking behavior where higher response efficacy predicts information-seeking behavior.

H8: There is an interaction effect between risk perception and response efficacy on information-seeking behavior where higher risk perception and higher response efficacy predict higher information-seeking behavior.

The fourth and the eighth hypotheses are not explicitly based on the literature and are therefore included in this study as explorative hypotheses to gain further knowledge about risk information-seeking behavior.

Method

Design

In this study, a correlational survey design was employed. There were six different variables. The independent variables were risk perception, personal involvement, self-efficacy and response efficacy. The dependent variables were information-seeking behavior and the used information channels. Moreover, in the fourth hypothesis, self-efficacy was also postulated as a mediating variable.

Participants

The target group of this research consisted of adult people because they are assumed to feel more responsible about themselves and their safety than younger people who are supervised by their parents. In order to get enough respondents, it was made use of a convenience sampling where people were invited to take part in the research. The participants were recruited by means of social networking sites like WhatsApp or Facebook where they got a message with the link of the online survey. The online survey was started by 126 participants and 104 of them completed it which made a dropout rate of 17 per cent. But because one participant was 17 years old and therefore not included in the target group, he was excluded from the study. This left 103 participants to be analyzed. Among them, there were 34 male (33%) and 69 female (67%) participants. The average age was M = 27.52 (SD = 11.92) and the age ranged from 18 to 57 years. Furthermore, 12 (11.7%) of the participants were Dutch

and 91 (88.3%) were German. Most of them (N = 90; 87.4%) lived together with others, but a few (N =13; 12.6%) lived on their own.

Measurements

The online program *Qualtrics* was used to create the online survey. By means of this survey, the different constructs mentioned in the hypotheses were measured. In addition, some demographic information was gathered about the participants. All items (except for the demographic information) that were used for this survey were extracted from existing and already validated scales and were adapted to the topic of burglary. Thereby, the changes were made as slightly as possible. Making it easier for both the participants and the subsequent statistical analyses, multiple choice questions were used. The complete questionnaire consisted of 26 items and can be found in Appendix A.

The items for measuring the constructs risk perception and response efficacy were taken from the Risk Behavior Diagnosis Scale (Witte, Mc Keon, Cameron, & Berkowit, 1995). Risk perception was measured by six items where participants could agree with on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = .53$. Thus, the inter-item-reliability was quite low. However, removing an item would not result in a higher reliability. Response efficacy was measured by three items where participants again could agree with on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha of those items was $\alpha = .77$.

Furthermore, the items for measuring the constructs personal involvement (five items), self-efficacy (four items) and information-seeking behavior (three items) were extracted from the scale of Ter Huurne (2008). Again, participants could agree with those items on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha for personal involvement was $\alpha = .49$ which is very low. Therefore, the fifth item ("I feel matched with people exposed to burglary.") was excluded from the analysis which left a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .54$ for the remaining items. The Cronbach's alpha for self-efficacy was $\alpha = .74$ and, finally, the Cronbach's alpha for information-seeking behavior was $\alpha = .79$. Thus, those two scales had a high inter-item reliability.

The last item of this survey concerning the used information channels was extracted from the article of Bouwmeester et al. (2012). It was slightly changed by translating it into English and by adding "social media" to the response possibilities while removing the open response possibility from it. Thus, there were seven response possibilities but only one could be chosen by the participants.

Procedure

The link to the online survey was sent to the participants individually but it was also shared on Facebook publicly. Thus, they had to click on this link to be transferred to the start of the online survey. There they found the informed consent which they had to read before filling in the questionnaire. After reading the informed consent, which can be found in Appendix B, they had the possibility to click on "I agree" or "I disagree". If they clicked on "I disagree", they would immediately be transferred to the end of the survey. But if they clicked on "I agree", they could start filling in the questionnaire. The first question block dealt with demographical information and then there were questions concerning the constructs risk perception, personal involvement, self-efficacy, response efficacy and information-seeking behavior. The last question was about the information channel the participants would use to search for information regarding their personal risk of becoming a victim of burglary. Finally, the questionnaire was completed and the people could close the window.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data according to the hypotheses, the data were first exported from *Qualtrics* to the statistics program SPSS. Then the data of the participants who did not fill in the survey completely or who did not belong to the target group were deleted. After that the items which were formulated negatively were rescored so that the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the items regarding each measured construct could be measured. Having done this, the descriptive statistics could be analyzed. Thus, the means, standard deviations and correlations for each construct were examined.

Next, the hypotheses were tested. For the first, second, third and seventh hypothesis a regression analysis was conducted where information-seeking behavior was the independent variable and where risk perception, personal involvement, self-efficacy and response efficacy were the predictors. To be able to test the fourth hypothesis, a mediation analysis should have been conducted. Therefore, different regression analyses had to be done. First, the main effect of personal involvement on information-seeking behavior was measured. As this was significant, the main effect of personal involvement on self-efficacy would have been measured. If this had also been significant, the main effect of self-efficacy on information-seeking behavior would have been measured. If this had been significant as well, then the interaction effect of personal involvement and self-efficacy on information-seeking behavior would have been measured. After that a Sobel test would have been conducted to make sure that the mediation is significant.

Moreover, the fifth hypothesis could be tested by using the non-parametric Chi-Square test to test the difference between percentages. In order to do that, the seven groups defined by the information channel they have chosen were reduced into two groups. Thus, all participants who chose the Internet were assigned to one group and all others were assigned to the other group. The sixth hypothesis was tested by using an independent sample t-test between those two groups. Thereby, the difference between average self-efficacy was examined. Finally, the eighth hypothesis was tested by conducting a hierarchical regression analysis to find out if there was an interaction effect of risk perception and response efficacy on information-seeking behavior.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

In order to get an overview of all constructs and results, the mutual correlations between all variables are examined. Furthermore, the means and standard deviations of all variables are analyzed. Those results can be found in table 1. They show that people perceive a relatively high risk of becoming a victim to burglary (M = 3.58; SD = .55) but that they do not search for information about it much (M = 2.54; SD = .99) although they find it quite effective to gather more information (M = 3.47; SD = .91). Furthermore, the table shows that risk perception correlates significantly only with self-efficacy but with no other variable. However, all of the other variables correlate significantly with each other. It is noticeable that information-seeking correlates highly with personal involvement (r = .47) and response efficacy (r = .44) which generally correlates highly with all of the other variables except for risk perception (r = .10).

Hypotheses Testing

The testing of the hypotheses revealed the following. First, a multiple regression analysis was employed to test information-seeking behavior as dependent variable and risk perception, personal involvement, self-efficacy and response efficacy as predictors. A significant model was observed [$F(4,98) = 9.99$; $p < 0.01$] with an adjusted R^2 of .26. The main effects of risk perception, personal involvement, self-efficacy and response efficacy were $t = .93$ ($\beta = .08$; $p = .35$), $t = 3.32$ ($\beta = .32$; $p < .01$), $t = .15$ ($\beta = .02$; $p = .88$) and $t = 2.65$ ($\beta = .28$; $p < .01$), respectively. Thus, the effects of personal involvement and response efficacy are significant while the effects of risk perception and self-efficacy are nonsignificant. Furthermore, the results show that personal involvement contributes the greatest prediction of the variance.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of the Independent and Dependent Variables (n = 103; 1 = highly disagree; 5 = highly agree)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Risk_Perception	3,58	,55	1				
2. Personal_Involvement	2,98	,71	,19	1			
3. Self_Efficacy	3,45	,73	,27**	,35**	1		
4. Response_Efficacy	3,47	,91	,10	,45**	,48**	1	
5. Information_Seeking	2,54	,99	,18	,47**	,28**	,43**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results from the regression analysis, it can be concluded that the mediation analysis of personal involvement, self-efficacy and information-seeking behavior cannot be conducted because there is no significant main effect of self-efficacy on information-seeking behavior. Thus, the relationship of personal involvement and information-seeking behavior is not mediated by self-efficacy. The fifth hypothesis can be tested by using the non-parametric Chi-Square test. The participants chose the response possibility “Internet” significantly more often than the other possibilities [$X^2(1, N=103) = 25.25$; $p < .01$].

Regarding the sixth hypothesis, an independent t-test on self-efficacy revealed a nonsignificant difference between the two above-mentioned groups ($t = .45$; $p = .66$). Finally, by means of a hierarchical regression analysis, a nonsignificant interaction effect of risk perception and response efficacy on information-seeking behavior was found ($t = -.06$; $p = .95$).

Conclusions and Discussion

This research was aimed on examining different determinants of information-seeking behavior regarding burglary by means of the Framework of Risk Information Seeking (FRIS) by Ter Huurne (2008). Therefore, the effects of risk perception, personal involvement and self-efficacy on information-seeking behavior were measured. Based on further literature review, response efficacy was included as a fourth determinant. Moreover, different interactions and connections of these determinants as predictors of information-seeking behavior were investigated. Furthermore, a second purpose of this research was to analyze the

role of the new media, especially the Internet, concerning risk information-seeking. Based on the results it can be said that the second, fifth and seventh hypotheses are confirmed while the other hypotheses are disproved. This will be explained in the following paragraphs. For a better overview table 2 is constructed.

Table 2

Overview of the Hypotheses, Their Status Based on the Results and Their p-Value

Hypothesis	**Confirmed/ disproved**	***p*-value**
H1: Higher risk perception predicts information-seeking behavior.	Disproved	$p = .35$
H2: Higher personal involvement predicts information-seeking behavior.	Confirmed	$p < .01$
H3: Higher self-efficacy predicts information-seeking behavior.	Disproved	$p = .88$
H4: The relationship of personal involvement and information-seeking behavior is mediated by self-efficacy.	Disproved	Not conducted because H3 was disproved
H5: People use the Internet more often than the other information channels as a means of their information search.	Confirmed	$p < .01$
H6: The average degree of self-efficacy will be higher in the group that mainly uses the Internet than in the group which chose another information channel.	Disproved	$p = .47$
H7: Higher response efficacy predicts information-seeking behavior.	Confirmed	$p < .01$
H8: There is an interaction effect between risk perception and response efficacy on information-seeking behavior where higher risk perception and higher response efficacy predict higher information-seeking behavior.	Disproved	$p = .95$

Based on the literature, it was hypothesized that there was a predictive effect of people's risk perception on their information-seeking behavior. However, the analysis disconfirmed this hypothesis. A reason for this could be the low alpha value of the risk perception scale. Another explanation could be, however, that burglary happens very often and people already are indifferent regarding this risk. This is supported by the study of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2014) which showed that just a small probability of the Dutch citizens thinks

that burglary could actually happen to them. The risk is so present that people could be accustomed to this constant risk and that they might not feel the need to search for more information. Furthermore, as already mentioned above, the FRIS only posits an indirect effect of risk perception on information-seeking behavior. Even though the hypothesis is disconfirmed and so are other research results which were mentioned above, the FRIS is not disproved by this research.

According to the literature, the second hypothesis proposed that people who are personally involved regarding a risk are more motivated to search for information about it because they want to reduce the possible negative consequences. As predicted, there is a significant effect of personal involvement on information-seeking behavior. Thus, people who perceive the risk as likely to happen to them and realize the negative consequences this might have are more likely to engage in information-seeking.

The results further show that the effect of self-efficacy on information-seeking behavior is nonsignificant. Therefore, the third hypothesis is disproved. A possible explanation would be that the participants do not view information-seeking as an effective form of preventing burglary. However, the average rate of response efficacy which describes the expected effectiveness of an act was quite high. Thus, there has to be another explanation. One opportunity might be that self-efficacy is influenced by having information. Thus, people who already know much about burglary are highly self-efficacious because they know what to do. Therefore they might not have the desire to obtain more information. This assumption can be supported by the literature. According to Borkowski, Carr, Rellinger and Pressley (1990), knowledge has a positive effect on self-esteem. Since self-esteem and self-efficacy are both part of the self-concept they tend to be highly correlated (Judge, Erez & Bono, 1998). Therefore, it could be proposed that knowledge also influences self-efficacy. As having enough knowledge is described as information sufficiency by Griffin et al. (1999), the construct of information-seeking behavior should be replaced by the construct of information sufficiency in this hypothesis. The predictive effect of self-efficacy on information sufficiency was already stated by Ter Huurne (2008). But this relation in the opposite direction has not yet been examined and, therefore, should be tested in further studies.

Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis is disproved as well. There is no significant mediation effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between personal involvement and information-seeking behavior. The explanation which was described for the third hypothesis can be ascribed here as well. Self-efficacy regarding a risk could be influenced by knowledge about it. Furthermore, the FRIS states that personal involvement has a direct effect on

information sufficiency which was proposed to displace the variable information-seeking behavior (Ter Huurne, 2008). As the current study showed that personal involvement also has a direct effect on information-seeking behavior which generates knowledge, this could also lead to the assumption that personal involvement could predict information sufficiency.

By contrast, the fifth hypothesis is confirmed. Thus, people choose the Internet most often to search for information about their personal safety regarding burglary. This is supported by the literature. A significant feature of the Internet is its opportunity of searching for information autonomously and easily (Wolf & Peuke, 2003). Search engines and news websites allow for a systematic and efficient information search. It satisfies the user by giving him the full control over his actions and providing many opportunities (Dimmick et al., 2004).

Because the Internet is an information channel which allows for independence and control of its users, it was hypothesized that the participants who use the Internet have a higher extent of self-efficacy than those who choose another information channel. However, this proved not to be true. Maybe the Internet already is so common that people do not have to feel confident to use it. As described in the introduction, the Internet is the most used medium and gradually replaces the traditional media (Dimmick et al., 2004). Thus, people might be accustomed to using it and there is no high feeling of self-efficacy required to make use of the Internet. This underlines the importance of distributing risk information on the Internet.

Based on the literature, it can be stated that searching for information requires the belief that this is useful. If people believe that the information to be found is reliable, relevant and accurate, and therefore benefits them, they are more likely to engage in information-seeking behavior (Witte, 1992, as cited in Kats, 2013). Therefore, it was hypothesized that response efficacy had a significant effect on information-seeking behavior. The analysis revealed that this effect was significant.

However, if response efficacy interacts with risk perception, there was no significant effect anymore. Thus, the eighth hypothesis is disproved. This could be due to the fact that the alpha value of the risk perception scale was quite low. Furthermore, the main effect of risk perception on information-seeking behavior was not significant either.

Now the overall research question which asked for the determinants of information-seeking behavior and the used information channel can be answered: Based on this research, the constructs personal involvement and response efficacy predict information-seeking behavior regarding burglary. Furthermore, the Internet plays a significant role in this search process.

Implications

Those results reveal some practical implications. The fifth hypothesis which stated that people mainly use the Internet as a means of their information search was confirmed. This shows that the police and other official institutions are on the right track by informing people about burglary on the Internet. This supports their effort to inform as many people as possible because the Internet enables a systematic and purposeful information search which motivates people to search for more information. They can do that independently and autonomously and are therefore more personally motivated and engaged (Wolf & Peuke, 2003). Furthermore, the Internet allows for control and more choices (Dimmick et al., 2004). Thus, people get to the information in their own initiative and are therefore assumed to be more likely to actually take action. This is the aim of such websites as the police's which was referred to in the introduction (Politie Nederland, n.d.).

Furthermore, the confirmation of the seventh hypothesis shows that people believe searching for information about burglary to be effective in preventing it. This further supports the police in giving adequate information and shows that they are already doing it quite effectively. Moreover, it shows that people perceive the Internet mainly as a reliable and high-quality source. Based on the technology acceptance model (TAM) which was referred to in the introduction and which states that beliefs influence behaviors it can be said that if people believe that the Internet is reliable and useful they are more likely to actually search for information (Lederer et al., 2000). Moreover, the significant effect of response efficacy on information-seeking behavior shows that people think that searching for information is a sort of self-protection. Therefore, more information about burglary should be given on the Internet and this should be ever more improved.

In addition, the results show that people tend to search for information more often if they are highly personally involved in burglary (hypothesis 2). Thus, if they realize that burglary can happen to them at any time and what its consequences may be, they are more motivated to search for information. Therefore, it should be made clear to people that burglary can happen to anyone and that they constantly are at risk of that. As described in the introduction, there are websites which inform about burglary. However, the construct personal involvement has a quite low mean score. This should be improved by making people more personally involved through adequate and personally directed warnings. Furthermore, the quite low score of information-seeking behavior could be raised by increasing the personal involvement of the people. This is important because they should be motivated to search for more information to be able to prevent personal damage.

Moreover, the study revealed a moderate correlation between personal involvement and self-efficacy which means that if people realize that they could become victims of burglary themselves they tend to feel more confident of being able to prevent the risk. Thus, if, for example, the police website would make people more personally involved in the case of burglary they would be more confident to prevent the risk and would be more likely to take the right actions. This would fit in the current shift of responsibility from the government to individuals. During the last decades there has been a shift in the form of governmental decision-making in the Netherlands and many other countries (Edelenbos, 2005). Citizens are now actively involved in governmental activities which include having the responsibility for the citizens' safety. Loyens and Van De Walle (2006) listed some factors which are necessary for this to be effective. Some of them are suitable in the case of informing people about their risk of becoming a victim of burglary. The people should namely be informed adequately, realistically and understandably. Furthermore, transparency and clarity of the information sources are conditions that need to be met.

Another correlation is also important to have a look at. There is namely a quite high correlation between self-efficacy and response efficacy. Thus, if people feel able to search for information and to use the Internet effectively, they find it more effective to search for it. They can use the Internet adequately and, therefore, know how to obtain useful and reliable information which can be helpful for their personal needs in preventing burglary. Furthermore, the study revealed that people generally view themselves as having high self-efficacy. This is good regarding the facts that the most used information channel is the Internet and that there is a shift of responsibility. However, there is the possibility that people cannot adequately estimate their own capacities and, therefore, their self-efficacy. Thus, the high extent of it could be delusive. Therefore it is even more important to have a look at what constitutes self-efficacy related to such individual risks.

As mentioned above, it could be proposed that information sufficiency could have an effect on self-efficacy. If having enough knowledge constitutes a higher rate of self-efficacy it would be more likely that people with high self-efficacy also actually can handle the risk. Thus, providing information is important to increase actual self-efficacy. This is also supported by Ter Huurne (2008) who states that it is important to encourage preventive actions by providing risk information about it. However, it could still not be known if people actually could use this information in practice.

As already stated in the introduction, the objective risk of burglary is about one per cent. Thus, the likelihood that people already became victims of burglary is small. However,

Stajkovic and Luthans (1979) state that self-efficacy is amongst others determined by already having handled a task effectively or by having seen someone similar handling this task effectively. As this is often not the case with burglary due to the low objective risk, there is the possibility that even if they read adequate information and feel able to handle the risk adequately, it could still turn out otherwise if it really happened. Thus, there should be more research done on this topic. As a conclusion it can still be said that the efficient way of providing risk information via the Internet with its independent and autonomous attributes fits the shift of responsibility to the individuals very well.

Limitations

Although the study revealed some interesting insights, there were some limitations as well. First, the Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs risk perception and personal involvement were quite low, which means that the items do not measure those constructs reliably. Thus, those results should be handled carefully. However, the effect of personal involvement on information-seeking behavior was proven in many other studies (e.g., Kievik et al., 2012). Thus, this effect does represent the current point of view and has therefore a higher reliability.

Second, the questionnaire was only available in English. The analyses revealed, however, that all of the participants were either Dutch or German and, therefore, have another mother tongue than English. Some participants mentioned language difficulties after having completed the survey. This could have produced misunderstandings and therefore it could have affected the results of the study. It also might have caused the low alpha values of the constructs risk perception and personal involvement.

Third, the study did not measure actual information-seeking behavior. Instead, the intention to do it was measured. This could make a difference because there could be a dissonance between people's expectations about their behavior and their actual behavior. Thus, a study where actual information-seeking behavior was measured could produce other results. However, Ajzen (1991) states that "as a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance" (p. 181). Thus, the intention does give a quite reliable representation of the actual behavior.

Further Research

By taking the limitations of this study into account, several suggestions for further research on this topic can be stated. First, to test the reliability of this study, other studies about individual risks could be conducted. Thereby, the determinants of information-seeking behavior defined

by the FRIS could be tested regarding the risks of, for example, robbery or abduction. Like burglary in this study, both robbery and abduction are rather individual risks which people have to deal with on their own. By contrast, most of the studies testing the FRIS concerned risks that applied to a big population of people at one time.

Second, the interactive relations of the determinants of information-seeking behavior could be further investigated. This study revealed a nonsignificant mediation effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between personal involvement and information-seeking behavior. But, as stated above, this hypothesis could be rearranged so that an effect of personal involvement on self-efficacy is stated which is mediated by information sufficiency. The results of the present study already showed that there is a moderate correlation between personal involvement and self-efficacy.

Third, further research should be conducted regarding the relationship of response efficacy and information-seeking on the Internet. For the government or the police to improve their websites it is important to find out why people perceive websites as effective, what makes those websites attractive or how they could be improved.

Fourth, this study could be reproduced with slight changes to test the assumptions more reliably. Therefore, the survey could be produced in more languages which would reduce the probability of misunderstandings and maybe increase the alpha values of the scales. Furthermore, the construct of information-seeking behavior should not only be measured by items but also in a way that was used by Kievik et al. (2012). In their study, the participants had the possibility to choose between four different links. Two of them were relevant regarding the concerned risk while the other two were not. Thereby actual information-seeking behavior could be measured. In addition, self-efficacy should be measured in an objective way as well. In order to do that, participants could be asked what they would do if they were in a particular situation regarding burglary. In this way it could be examined if they really knew what they should do and, therefore, the measurement would be more reliable.

To be concluded, this study revealed some interesting insights into the information-seeking behavior of people regarding their personal risk of burglary. Despite having some limitations, it revealed many practical implications for the improvement of information channels in the case of burglary. Finally, this study paved the way for some interesting further research on this topic.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?
[open question]

3. What is your nationality?
- Dutch
- German
- Other, [open question]

4. What is your living situation?
- I live on my own.
- I live together with others.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you agree with the following statements (1= strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)?

Risk Perception:

	1	2	3	4	5
5. I believe that burglary is severe.					
6. I believe that burglary has serious negative consequences.					
7. I believe that burglary is extremely harmful.					
8. It is likely that I will become a victim of burglary.					
9. I am at risk for becoming a victim of burglary.					
10. It is possible that I will become a victim of burglary.					

Personal Involvement:

	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is important to seek information about burglary in my life.					
12. I am interested in burglary happening in my surroundings.					
13. I do not feel connected with people exposed to burglary.					
14. I feel different from people					

exposed to burglary.					
15. I feel matched with people exposed to burglary.					

Self-Efficacy:
I would be able to:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16. Protect myself against the possible consequences of burglary.					
17. Do what I have to do when I hear about a case of burglary in my surroundings.					
18. Act in the right way to prevent burglary.					
19. Get and make sense of information about this risk.					

Response Efficacy:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20. Searching for information about preventing burglary is effective in preventing burglary.					
21. Searching for information about preventing burglary works in preventing burglary.					
22. If I search for information about preventing burglary and apply that, I am less likely to become a victim of burglary.					

Information-Seeking Behavior:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23. I search for as much information as possible about burglary.					
24. I search for information about what I would have to do to prevent burglary.					
25. If burglary happens anywhere in my home town, I am likely to search for information about it.					

26. Please tick the one of the following opportunities that is most likely for you.

I would search for information by making use of:

- Telephone (call somebody)
- Personal Contact
- Internet (search engines, news websites, etc.)
- Social Media
- Television
- Radio
- Newspaper

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

This research project is aimed to gain insight into people's information-seeking behavior. The following survey deals with the risk of becoming a victim of burglary and the opportunities of preventing that. The goal of this study is to gather data for a bachelor thesis at the University of Twente. It is conducted by Sarah Hackmann.

The survey consists of 26 multiple choice questions or statements. Thus, completing it will not take longer than 10 to 15 minutes.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose not to participate. If you decided to participate, you can also choose to withdraw from participation at any time prior to the completion of the survey by simply abandoning the survey. Completing the survey implies your consent of participation.

There are no known risks to participation in this research project. By consenting to participate in this research project, you have not waived your rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

No personal data such as name or address will be collected. Your responses will be handled confidentially and anonymously. No one will be able to identify you or know whether you participated in this study. There are no right or wrong answers.

The survey results will be stored on a password-protected laptop. All information and data collected will be stored safely. Information from the online survey will be summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me via s.hackmann@student.utwente.nl.