



**Victim Impact Statements
in Canada:
An Archival Analysis of
Sentencing Outcomes**



One University. One World. Yours.

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Archival Research

What do Victim Impact Statements DO?

Goals of VIS:

- To influence sentencing?
 - Research is unclear

VIS in Canada:

- VIS in Canada are presented at *sentencing*.
- They cannot impact *verdict*.
- Much of the U.S research is not applicable (E.g., Capital Cases, Mock Jury studies)

Current Study:

- Archival Analysis of Canadian Sentencing Outcomes

Step

1

Search “Impact Statement” in CanLII
(filter by province and year)

Step

2

Creation of the Archival Dataset
(Includes Coding and Cleaning)

Step

3

Analysis
(Several Studies)

Variables in the Dataset

of Variables = 89



Charges

Sexual offences, Homicide, Assault, Kidnapping, Theft, Drugs, Other



VIS information

Number submitted, Format of delivery, gender of person who submitted, Other



Victim Demographics

Of Victims, Age, Gender, Relationship to Offender



Sentencing Info

Incarceration/Probation sentences, parole eligibility, Ancillary Orders



Legal/Case Info

File, Date, Province, Judge, Counsel



Aggravating/ Mitigating Factors

E.G., Remorse, nature of offence, plea



Offender Demographics

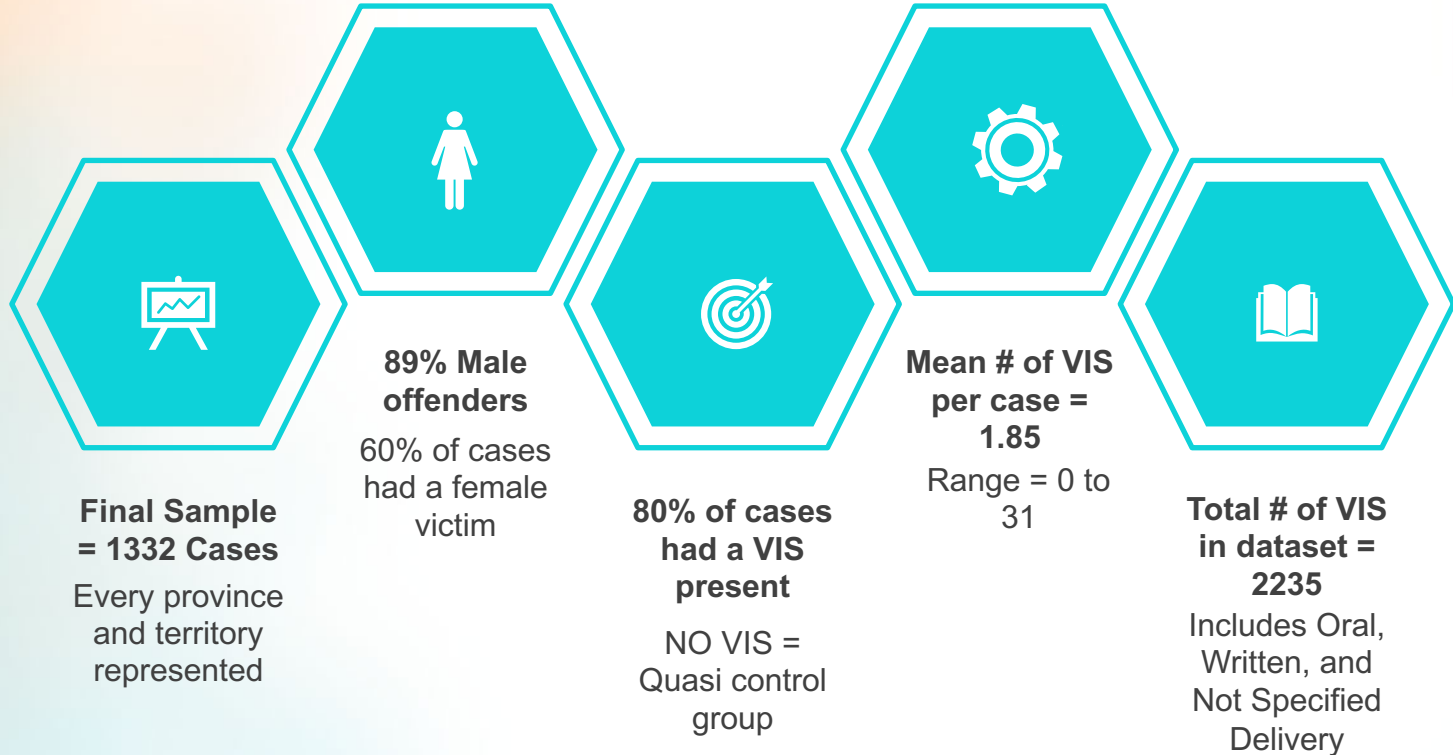
Age, Gender, Ethnicity



Other MISC

Why no VIS? Gladue Report? Joint recommendation? VIS by Indirect Vic?

Results



Q1: Are crime victims more likely to submit a VIS for some offences than others?

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Standardized Beta</i>	<i>Wald χ^2</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Exp (B) Odds Ratio</i>
<i>Contact Sexual Offences</i>	.55	7.92	<.00***	1.78
<i>Non-Contact Sexual Offences</i>	-.25	1.15	.28	.78
<i>1st degree Murder</i>	1.70	2.62	.11	5.45
<i>2nd degree Murder</i>	2.36	14.98	<.00***	10.62
<i>Other Homicide Charges</i>	2.00	31.52	<.00***	7.40
<i>Assault</i>	.18	1.03	.31	1.20
<i>Kidnapping/Confinement</i>	-.01	.002	.97	.99
<i>Theft/Fraud</i>	.03	.02	.88	1.03
<i>Drug Charges</i>	-.76	3.03	.08	.47
<i>“Other” Charges</i>	-.24	2.38	.12	.78

Q2: Does the Nature of the Victim-Offender Relationship Impact the Likelihood of VIS submission?

Chi-Square: ($\chi^2 = 17.01$; $p = 0.017$)



Strangers



Immediate Family



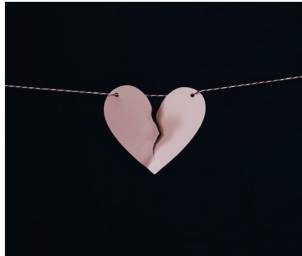
Extended Family



Friends or Acquaintances



Romantic or Sexual Partners



Ex-Partners



Professional or Work Relationship



Position of Authority

Q3: Is the length of sentence (incarceration or probation) affected by the presence or absence of a VIS?

Significant Results:

Overall MANOVA

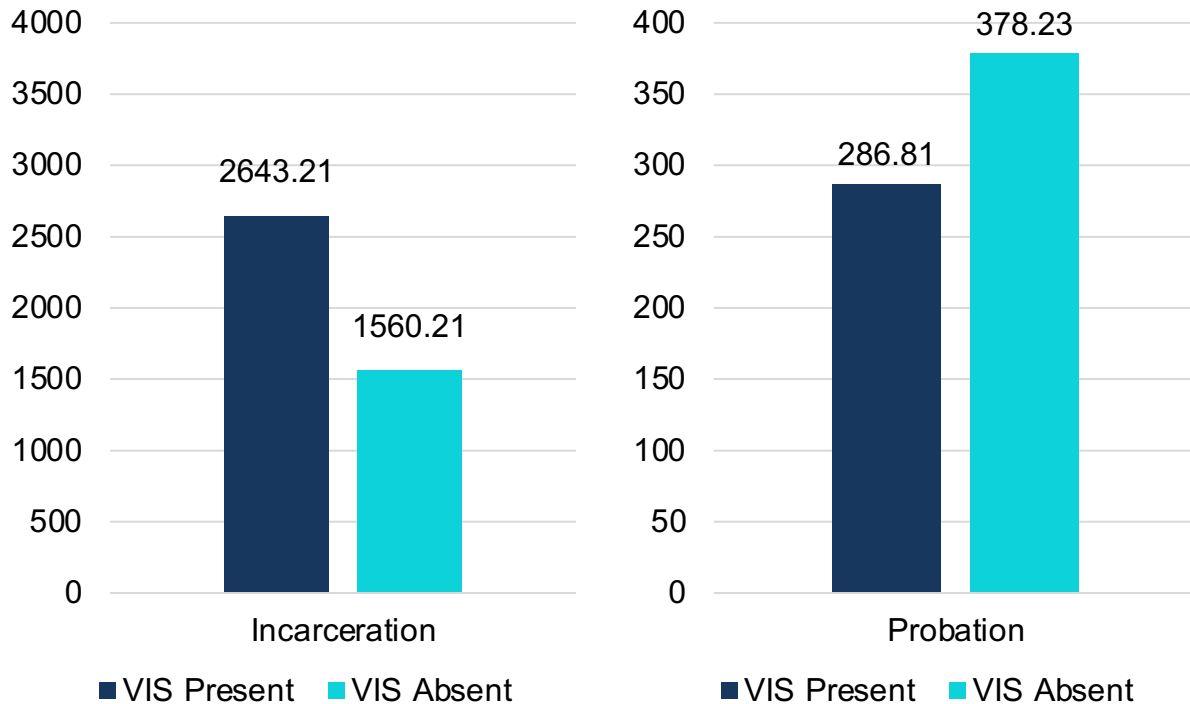
($F [2, 1299] = 13.21, p < .00, \eta_p^2 = .02$).

Incarceration

($F [1, 1300] = 25.14, p < .00, \eta_p^2 = .02$)

Probation

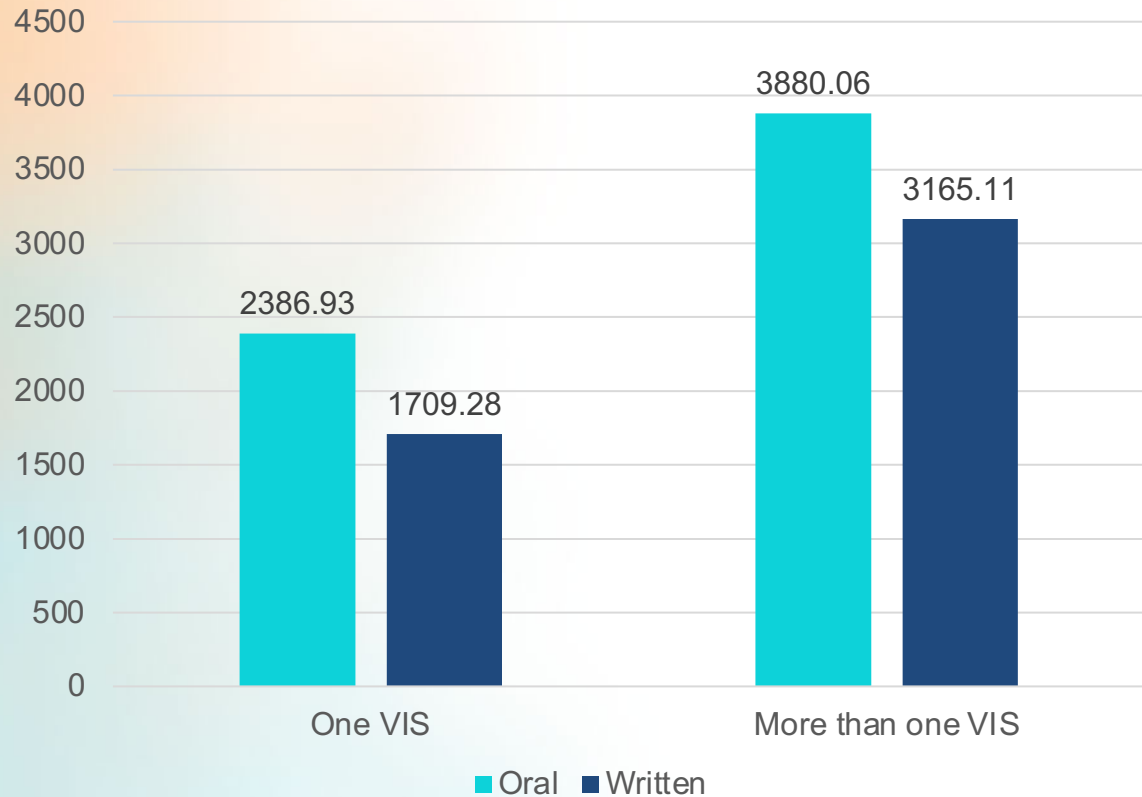
($F [1, 1300] = 9.52, p < .00, \eta_p^2 = .01$).



*Q4: Does Controlling for the Type of Crime Committed
Impact the effect of VIS on Sentencing Outcome?*

<i>Predictor Variable</i>	<i>Standardized Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Contact Sexual Offences</i>	.21	7.39	<.00**
<i>Non-Contact Sexual Offences</i>	.16	7.39	<.00**
<i>1st Degree Murder</i>	.21	9.95	<.00**
<i>2nd Degree Murder</i>	.68	29.50	<.00**
<i>Other homicide offences</i>	.30	12.04	<.00**
<i>Assault Related Charges</i>	.10	4.09	<.00**
<i>Kidnapping Related Charges</i>	.16	7.63	<.00**
<i>Theft/Fraud Related Charges</i>	.15	6.25	<.00**
<i>Drug Related Charges</i>	.06	2.70	<.00**
<i>“Other” Charges</i>	.13	5.73	<.00**
<i>Presence of VIS*</i>	.04	1.75	0.08

Q5: Do the number of VIS Submitted or the Format of Delivery Impact Sentence Length?



2x2 Factorial ANOVA Significant Main Effects:

Number of VIS:

$F(1, 538) = 37.10, p < 0.00.$
 $\eta_p^2 = 0.07.$

Format of Delivery:

$F(1, 538) = 8.27, p = 0.04.$
 $\eta_p^2 = 0.02.$

Interaction NOT Significant:

$F(1, 538) = 0.006, p = .094.$
 $\eta_p^2 = 0.00.$

Discussion

How do VIS relate to sentencing in the real world?

Real World Data

- First study to ever analyze Canadian archival data in relation to VIS
- Likelihood of submission and sentencing

Limitations

- Limited ability to make cause > effect conclusions
- LOTS of missing data

The Relationships are Complicated

- There are lots of confounding factors

Future (Experimental) Research is Recommended

- There are lots of extraneous variables that warrant further examination + dissection of cause/effect relationships

Thanks to the Team!

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Thank You!

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One University. One World. Yours.

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