

An Exploratory Study of Theselected Psychological Factors Among Criminals



Psychology

KEYWORDS : Murderers, frauds, Robbers, general well-being, social support, self-confidence

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ABSTRACT

It is been well researched that behind every crime there are some psychological manifestations. It may be seen that there are lot of crimes and criminal activities taking place in a country. The three types of crimes which are taken under the present study are murder, fraud and robbery. The purpose of the study was to assess the psychological factors among three types of criminals namely robbers, frauds and murderers. The sample of 30 was taken in the present study which was divided into three groups equally. The first group comprised of frauds (10), second group included robbers (10) and third comprised of murderers (10). The sample was taken from central jail of Ajmer district. The tools employed in the present research were PGI General Well Being Measure, Agnihotri's Self Confidence Inventory and Perceived Social Support Inventory. Results showed that majority of the murderers were having low level of self-confidence. Criminals possessed low social competency, murderers felt that they receive very poor social support and majority of frauds perceived moderate level of general well-being.

Introduction

Crime that it is a category created by law i.e., if applicable law says that it is a crime, the person is a criminal (Lindsay, 2008).

Anyone who breaks the law is technically a criminal; even if the crime is just not paying a speeding ticket. It may be seen that there are lot of crimes and criminal activities taking place in a country. The three types of crimes which are taken under the present study are murder, fraud and robbery.

While every crime violates the law, not every violation of the law counts as a crime. Breaches of private law (torts and breach of contract) are not automatically punished by the state, but can be enforced through civil procedure (Eastern, 2013).

In the present study three types of criminals were taken namely, frauds, robbers and murderers.

Murder is the unlawful killing, with malice for thought, of another human, and generally this premeditated state of mind distinguishes murder from other forms of unlawful homicide (such as manslaughter). Most societies both present and in antiquity have considered murder a most serious crime worthy of the harshest of punishment, under the justification that commission of murder is highly detrimental to good order with society (Hart, 1972).

Fraud is a deception deliberately practiced in order to secure unfair or unlawful gain. Or a false representation of a matter of a fact – whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of what should have been disclosed – that deceive and is intended to deceive another so that the individual will act upon it to her or his legal injury.

Robbery is a crime taking or attempting to take anything of value by force or threat of force or by putting the victim in fear. At common law, robbery is defined as taking the property of another, with the intent to permanently deprive the person of that property, by means of force or fear.

It is been also observed that crime is often related to the psychological tendencies of an individual.

It is also observed that these types of crimes not only have socio-economic factors but also have certain psychological factors due to which an individual commits a crime. It would seem therefore that a wider definition of the term is needed. A leading American has gone some way to provide this. He described criminal psychology as any application of psychological knowledge or

methods to a task faced by the legal system (Bull et al., 2010).

Some of the psychological aspects which be assessed in the present study are Self Confidence, General Well Being, Perceived Social Support.

Self-confidence is essentially an attitude which allows us to have a positive and realistic perception of ourselves and our abilities. It is characterized by personal attributes such as assertiveness, optimism, enthusiasm, affection, pride, independence, trust, the ability to handle criticism and emotional maturity.

Well-being or welfare is a general term for the condition of an individual or group, for example their social, economic, psychological, spiritual or medical state; high well-being means that, in some sense, the individual or group's experience is positive, while low well-being is associated with negative happenings.

Social support is the physical and emotional comfort given to us by our family, friends, co-workers and others. It knows that we are part of a community of people who love and care for us, and value and think well of us. Social support is a way of categorizing the rewards of communication in a particular circumstance. An important aspect of support is that a message or communicative experience does not constitute support unless the receiver views it as such.

Therefore, it may be said that psychological factors influencing crime must be studied in order to put forward some efforts to prevent criminal activities.

Lang (1987) conducted a study on four groups of serving prisoners, 29 murderers, 30 assaulters, 51 armed robbers, and 25 nonviolent controls, were compared on measures of personality, demographic variables, and past history of violence. Results showed that murderers, on the whole, more often distorted their clinical profiles by minimizing their aggressiveness or propensity for violence. History of violence variables were "better" predictors of group membership than personality indices. Overall, defensiveness emerged as a major characteristic of the murderer. In contrast, the armed robbers and assaulters tended to distort primarily their self-confidence and level of self-consciousness. The findings call into question the usefulness of personality measures in assessing and understanding the violent individual.

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to assess the psychological factors among three types of criminals namely robbers, frauds

and murderers. The objective of the study included the assessment level of self-confidence general well-being and perceived social support among criminals. The sample of 30 was taken in the present study which was divided into three groups equally. The first group comprised of frauds (10), second group included robbers (10) and third comprised of murderers (10). The sample was taken from central jail of Ajmer district. The tools employed in the present research were PGI General Well Being Measure, Agnihotri's Self Confidence Inventory and Perceived Social Support Inventory. These questionnaires were administered on the subject and the scoring of the answer sheets was done according to the manual. Statistical tools were applied in order to tabulate the raw data obtained and result tables were formed.

Results

Table 1: Showing frequency and percentage of the criminals lying in a particular level of the self-confidence.

Categories	Frauds	Robbers	Murderers	Total Frequency	Percent
Very Low	2	2	3	7	25
Low	3	4	7	14	45
Average	3	3	1	7	25
High	2	0	0	2	5
Total	10	10	10	30	100.0

Table 1 shows that the majority of the murderers were having low level of self-confidence may be because they are anxious about their family and also feel guilty about their misconduct. Frauds on the other hand were found to have high self-confidence indicating that as their severity of punishment is low they don't have fear about their family. Robbers were also found to have average to low level of self-confidence.

Table 2: Showing frequency and percentage of the criminals lying in a particular level of the perceived social support.

Categories	Frauds	Robbers	Murderers	Total Frequency	Percent
Very Poor	1	3	3	7	25
Poor	4	4	6	14	42
Average	3	2	1	6	22
Good	2	1	0	3	10
Total	10	10	10	30	100.0

Table 2 indicates that murderer feel that they receive very poor social support from friends, family and significant others whereas compared to the other type of criminals taken in the study frauds were found to perceive better level of social support from the society and community.

Table 3: Showing frequency and percentage of the criminals lying in a particular level of the general well-being.

Categories	Frauds	Robbers	Murderers	Total Frequency	Percent
Low	3	4	5	12	40.0
Moderate	6	5	5	16	55.0
High	1	1	0	2	5.0
Total	10	10	10	30	100.0

Table 3 states that the criminals have slight feeling of contentment, satisfaction with life experiences and of ones role in the world of work. They have sense of achievement and utility but along with the feeling of stress, dissatisfaction and worry. This may be due to the reason that after committing a crime the

criminals have achieved their goal but are still afraid of the possible consequences. They get all the basic facilities in the prison and they think that they are happy about the crime they have conducted and try to justify it but inside they feel guilty and feel worried about their loved ones living outside the prison.

Conclusions

The conclusion of the results is follows:

- Criminals possess low social competency, are emotionally immature, intellectually inadequate, unsuccessful,unsatisfied, indecisive, pessimistic, dependent, unassertive and have low leadership qualities depicting low self-confidence.
- None of the criminals had perceived social support in very good category. This may be due to the reason that they have been proved guilty by the court and society views the criminals in a discriminative manner and behave with them in a prejudiced way. They feel isolated as even their family members and friends do not see them like the way they used to.
- Majority of frauds perceived moderate level of general well-being and murderers were found to have moderate to low level of general well-being.

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