



The Psychology of Crime in Modern Forensic Practice

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DESCRIPTION

Criminal behavior has long captured the attention of psychologists and forensic experts due to its multifaceted origins and manifestations. It involves actions that violate societal laws and norms, often leading to legal consequences. However, within the realm of forensic psychology, criminal behavior is understood not only as a legal violation but also as the result of complex psychological, biological, and social influences.

Various theories have been developed to explain why individuals engage in criminal acts. Psychodynamic perspectives suggest that early life experiences and unconscious conflicts play a significant role. Individuals with unresolved inner turmoil, possibly resulting from childhood trauma or poor parental attachment, may develop maladaptive coping mechanisms that lead to antisocial or aggressive behavior. Behavioral theories, on the other hand, focus on learning and conditioning. These theories propose that people learn criminal behaviors through observation and reinforcement, especially if such behavior is modelled by family members or peers and is perceived to bring rewards.

Cognitive theories highlight how faulty thinking patterns contribute to criminality. Many offenders exhibit cognitive distortions such as minimizing the harm caused by their actions, blaming victims, or justifying their behavior based on perceived injustices. These distortions reduce feelings of guilt and facilitate repeated criminal activity. A more comprehensive approach is offered by the biopsychosocial model, which integrates genetic vulnerabilities, neurological abnormalities, psychological traits such as impulsivity or low empathy, and environmental stressors like poverty, abuse, or peer influence. This model underscores that no single factor causes criminal behavior but rather a combination of interrelated elements.

Offenders can be categorized based on their behavioral patterns and motivations. Violent offenders often act out of impulsive aggression or emotional instability. Sex offenders may be driven

by deviant desires, control, or unresolved psychological issues. White-collar criminals typically engage in deceitful practices for financial gain and often display manipulative or narcissistic tendencies. Among the most studied profiles are psychopathic offenders, who exhibit superficial charm, lack of remorse, and a high risk of reoffending. Understanding these typologies aids forensic psychologists in tailoring assessments and interventions.

Risk assessment is an important aspect of forensic psychology. Professionals use structured tools and clinical evaluations to estimate the likelihood of future offenses. Instruments such as the HCR-20 and Static-99 help in identifying static factors (like criminal history) and dynamic factors (such as current mental state or environment) that influence recidivism. These evaluations play a vital role in decisions related to sentencing, parole, and treatment planning.

Treatment and rehabilitation of offenders is an evolving field within forensic psychology. While punitive measures remain part of the criminal justice system, there is growing recognition of the need for therapeutic interventions. Cognitive-behavioral therapy has proven effective in addressing criminal thinking and improving emotional regulation. Programs may also focus on substance abuse treatment, anger management, and vocational training. For high-risk individuals, especially those with personality disorders or severe mental illnesses, a combination of therapy and medication may be necessary.

CONCLUSION

The study of criminal behavior in forensic psychology is essential for the justice system to operate more effectively and humanely. It informs legal decisions, enhances public safety, and promotes offender rehabilitation. By delving into the psychological roots of crime, forensic professionals can offer insights that not only aid in understanding criminal actions but also in preventing future offenses. As research advances, the ability to identify at-risk individuals early and intervene constructively holds promise for reducing crime and fostering societal well-being.

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