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Criminal Psychology and the Criminal Behavior of Offenders

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Abstract: ***Criminal psychology delves into intricate relationship between the human mind and criminal behavior. This paper explores various psychological theories and factor that contribute to criminal actions, examining the motivations, thought processes, and emotional states of offenders. Key areas of focus include personality traits, cognitive biases, social learning, and the impact of environmental factors. The paper also discusses the role of mental illness in criminal behavior, emphasizing the importance of accurate assessment and appropriate interventions. The primary focus of criminal psychology is the investigation of the fundamental causes of criminal behaviour. Psychologists working in this field examine not just the intentions and thoughts of criminals, but also their subsequent responses to their criminal behaviour. Understanding criminal behaviour and being able to regulate and alter it are the goals of criminal psychology. "Crime" and "criminal" are very contextual concepts. Crime is defined as an act that demonstrates a lack of cultural and social adaptability and is legally regarded as an act of Criminality, on the other hand, Criminal denotes the desire and mindset to engage in illegal activity. A crime is an act that violates the law. The goal of criminal psychology is to regulate criminal behaviour by offering interventions. The purpose of this essay is to evaluate the theories' merits and shortcomings in elucidating the reasons behind criminal activity and offending. In addition to social learning theory and the general aggression model in relation to violent and aggressive behaviour, as well as personality theories like the "big five" model and personality dimensions theory in relation to antisocial, impulsive, and criminal behaviour in general, we will use a number of psychological factors to assess the explanations provided for this study. These theories have been selected due to their relevance to the subject of behaviour and relatability of criminal behaviour.***

Keywords: Crime, Criminal Psychology, Psychological Factors, Criminality, Criminal Behaviour, Criminal Interventions, Behaviour Modification

I. INTRODUCTION

Criminal behaviour is a complex phenomenon influenced by a multitude of factors, including psychological, social, and environmental influences. Criminal psychology seeks to understand the underlying motivations, thought processes and emotional states that drive individuals to engage in criminal activities. This field of study has significant implication for law enforcement, the legal system and the development of effective crime prevention and rehabilitation strategies. "Crime" and "Criminal" are very contextual terms. It is better understood and ought to be applied in relation to the particular legal and judicial systems of a certain state, nation, or province carefully because what one culture views as a crime may not be in another society. However, in some states, cultures, provinces, or legal systems, an act may be regarded as a criminal, but in other enlightened civilizations, it may be regarded as an illness. The goal of criminal psychology is to reduce crime by offering solutions for criminal behaviour. Sometimes it's hard to determine what constitutes criminality. It is situation-based as well as contextual in nature. When a soldier in a conflict kills a counter-army soldier, it is regarded as a display of courage and honour. However, it is regarded as a crime by citizens. It's crucial to take into account whether a civilian crime was committed in self-defence, while under the influence of drugs, or in response to peer pressure. Therefore, according to the legal definition, an act that violates the law is a crime; on the other hand, the normative definition of crime emphasizes an act that transgresses our moral code. In conclusion, it is ambiguous to classify an act as a crime because there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a criminal. Only in relation to the legal system, social culture, and act context can the meaning of crime be comprehended.

II. CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

Criminal psychology is the study of Criminal behaviour, where term behaviour includes Personality, Attitude, Physiology, Learning, Motivation, Thinking and other cognitive Factors which contribute to the act of crime or criminal intentions. It is important to understand the psychology of criminals as it enables us to describe, explain, predict and control such behaviour.

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A. Criminal Behaviour

Crime is the specific action that exemplifies criminal behaviour, which is any behaviour or act that violates the criminal law. Concern for the criminality of behaviour directs attention to outside variables that may cause someone's actions to be illegal or to be classified as such These perspectives on crime have also been impacted by positivism in that they are methods that are equally focused on determining the "facts" that lead to criminal activity. Criminal activity is regarded as a serious social issue with many underlying reasons, especially aggressive and antisocial behaviour. Numerous environmental, social, and psychological elements are known to be linked to a higher likelihood of conviction for this kind of crime. Poverty, substandard housing, high levels of social inequality in society, low educational achievement, poor diet, low self-esteem, and impulsivity are all interrelated variables.

B. Psychological Theories of Criminal Behaviour

- Psychodynamic Theories: These theories, rooted in the work of Sigmund Freud, emphasize the role of unconscious drives and early childhood experience in shaping criminal behaviour. They suggest that unresolved conflicts and trauma can lead to maladaptive coping mechanisms and a predisposition towards criminal activity.
- Behavioural Theories: These theories focus on the role of learning and environmental factor in shaping behaviour. They suggest that criminal behaviour is learned through observation, imitation and reinforcement. Social learning theory for example, posits that individuals learn criminal behaviour through interactions with others, such as family members, peers and role models.
- Cognitive Theories: These theories emphasize the role of cognitive processes, such as thinking, decision making, and problem solving in criminal behaviour. They suggest that offenders may possess cognitive distortions, such as a tendency to minimize the consequences of their actions or to blame others of their problems.
- Trait Theories: These theories focus on individual personality traits and characteristics that may predispose individuals to criminal behaviour. They suggest that certain personality traits, such as impulsivity, aggression, and lack of empathy, may be associated with an increased risk of criminal involvement.
- Rational Choice Theory: The rational actor, predestined actor, and victimized actor are the three models of criminal action that fall under this theory. The rational actor suggested that people make decisions about whether or not to commit crimes. According to this theory, crime might be easily reduced by stiffening the punishment for violators (Burke, 2001). According to the predestined actor, criminals are driven to do crimes because they are unable to manage their surroundings and inner desires. Changing the offender's biological, social, and psychological surroundings would then be the solution to this issue (Burke, 2001). Last but not least, the victimized actor model suggests that criminal behaviour results from the perpetrator's experience as a victim of an unfair society. Therefore, changing the law could help reduce the crime (Burke, 2001).

C. *Factors Contributing to Criminal Behaviour*

- Biological Factors: Genetic predispositions, neurological abnormalities, and hormonal imbalances can all play a role in influencing criminal behaviour. There are several types of crime control, which involve artificial interference in human biology such as Psychosurgery, chemical methods of control, brain stimulation and others.
- Social Factor: Poverty ,socio-economic disadvantage, exposure to violence and social isolation can increase the risk of criminal involvement .In education a person's chances of succeeding in society are significantly influenced by their level of education. Absence from school-level education increases the likelihood of future criminal action and delinquency. When compared to lawful work, education alters the relative opportunities provided by crime, especially property crime. Higher education guarantees a higher income, which makes work more alluring than crime. For children under 13, a low level of parental education—neither parent holds a diploma—has also been found to be a risk factor for future criminal activity. Impact of peer pressure, although it is difficult to quantify, community and neighbourhood effects on criminality do seem to have an impact on crime and antisocial behaviour. The older a youngster becomes, the more significant the neighbourhood influences become. Peer pressure has a greater impact during adolescence than parental influence. This is a result of teenagers' ease in relating to their own age group. Throughout adolescence, every person experiences significant changes in their mental and bodily makeup. Parents cannot connect with their children of that age range as well as they can. Furthermore, it raises the likelihood of deviance and antisocial behaviour if a person experiences social rejection from their peers during this stage of life. According to research presented by Cowan & Cowan in 2004, peer rejection is largely caused by the parents' marital status because a disturbed home environment has an impact on children's psyches, which is further demonstrated by how they interact with other kids. They are drawn to antisocial peer groups as a result of the rejection they receive from their peers for their behaviour. Children who are associated with these organizations during their adolescent years may develop unfavourable traits as a result. They might also abuse drugs or alcohol.

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- Psychological Risk Factor: Lack of empathy: Animal cruelty is seen to be linked to a lack of empathy, which in turn leads to aggressive behaviour toward people. "Socially unacceptable behaviour that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress to animals" is the definition of cruelty to animals. Since the inability to feel another person's grief correlates with aggression in both men and women, a lack of affective empathy is thought to be closely associated with a future propensity for violent criminal behaviour. cognitive and linguistic deficit: Despite widespread generalization, most boys who experience cognitive and language deficiencies turn to antisocial behaviour. Since children with language impairments frequently exhibit weak and uninterested academic performance, which further erodes their stability and confidence, the beginning of deviance is thus extremely visible. Personality/Big Five Model: According to Clark, Boccaccian, Caillouet, and Chaplin (2007), personality is what defines us as individuals and what sets us apart from others. Personality should ideally remain constant over time. Research on the connection between criminal behaviour and personality has frequently produced contradictory findings. The Big Five model of personality is one of the most well-known models of psychology that is used to study this relationship. The majority of personality traits can be grouped into this model's robust framework. According to Clark et al. (2007), this model proposes that five domains—neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—account for individual differences in personality. Psychopath personality: According to Siegal (2009), the terms psychopathy, antisocial personality, and sociopath are interchangeable. A toxic home situation frequently produces sociopaths. Psychopaths are the result of an internal flaw or abnormality. Low levels of guilt, shallow charm, above-average intelligence, a persistent inability to build lasting relationships, impulsivity, risk-taking, egocentricity, manipulativeness, forcefulness, cold-heartedness, and shallow emotions are characteristics of the antisocial personality (Jacoby, 2004). According to Siegal (2008), the cause could be neurological disorders, brain abnormalities, or traumatic socialization. It's interesting to note that if a neurological test indicates that a person has low levels of arousal, they may compensate by engaging in high-risk behaviours like crime or thrill-seeking. A parent with pathologic inclinations, traumatic experiences as a youngster, or uneven punishment are other factors that could influence a psychopathic disposition. It is crucial to remember that a large number of persistent criminals are sociopaths. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the causes influencing human development at an early age are the primary cause of crime if personality traits are able to predict crime and violence.

III. THE ROLE OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Mental illness can play a significant role in some cases of criminal behaviour. However, it is important to note that not all individuals with mental illness are violent or engage in criminal activity. In some cases, mental illness can impair an individual’s judgment, increase impulsivity, or contribute to hallucinations or delusions that may lead to criminal behaviour.

A. Prevention of the Crime

- Moral Restructuring: We frequently think about how reality is seen rather than reality itself because of our beliefs. Deviance is created when the moral code is subjectively regarded as being determined by one's beliefs. The conditions impacted by perceptivity are correlated with subjectivity. A perspective is a viewpoint that allows us to subjectively analyse an objective aspect of life. Since circumstances govern one and not the other way around, it is only natural to stray from reality. We must support the creation and application of an impartial moral code in order to combat social deviation. In order to maintain an objective interpretation of the moral code, community policing enables individuals to put aside their subjectivity and cooperate with the community.
- Problem-Oriented Policing: This approach balances the police's proactive and reactive responsibilities. "In its broadest sense, problem-oriented policing is an all-encompassing strategy for enhancing law enforcement where the emphasis placed on resolving significant issues Molds the police force and influences all organizational, procedural, and individual changes." Professional policing, which is predicated on fostering operational efficiency with regard to quick response, centralized control, and impartiality, has drastically changed from problem-oriented police. It reduces the police to a merely reactive and responsive social agency.
- Surveillance: With the proliferation of surveillance cameras in recent years, numerous studies have examined whether or not using them lowers crime. There isn't yet a certain consensus, though. After reviewing 44 previous research on the impact of surveillance cameras on crime, criminologists Brandon Welsh and David Farrington concluded that the evidence is conflicting: Three studies indicated that cameras greatly increase crime, fifteen found that cameras significantly reduce crime, and twenty-three found no significant effect at all. Technical and natural observation raises the stakes for potential criminals. Technical monitoring with closed-circuit television (CCTV) or encouraging "eyes on the street," as promoted by Jane Jacobs, through land

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use to maximize pedestrian presence day and night are two ways to do surveillance. Making sure that trees and shrubs don't obstruct street lighting is a specific type of design that promotes natural monitoring. The interactive website Secured by Design offers further instances of design that accomplishes natural surveillance.

- Problem solving nature: Community policing adapts problem solving philosophy as a crucial component of its functionality. It is based on an underlying assumption that every crime and act of incivility can be sourced down to specific areas by understanding the characteristics of region-specific problems and then apply available resources. An assumption that individuals are inclined to make opportunity-based choices affected by instantaneous physical and social characteristics of the concerned area. Thus, any positive institutional change regarding these factors will decline the probability of occurrence of offensive activities. “The incidents will continue so long as the problem that creates them persists.” Such collaboration with the community to resolve problems shall reinforce trust and facilitate exchange of information leading to identification of other connected areas which could be resolved by availing the benefit of mutual understanding between the police and the community.

IV. DISCUSSION

The current study's findings showed that there is no discernible difference between people with and without criminal records in terms of their personality attributes.

Extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism are high in the former group, according to Eysenck's theory, which has been further supported by multiple earlier investigations (Adler, Mueller, & Laufer, 2012; Levine & Jackson, 2004). However, there is disagreement about whether they are higher, lower, or equal to the other population (Schuessler & Cressey, 1950). According to the situational theory of personality, external, situational factors—rather than internal characteristics—have a greater influence on behaviour. Therefore, it is possible that the findings of this study might be explained by applying Miel's theoretical framework for behaviour and personality. Professionals in this discipline agree that the only way to accurately understand behaviour is to include the combined effects of situational circumstances and individual dispositions (Smallbone & Cale, n.d.). Understanding how elements like personal traits, social support, and socioeconomic level interact to contribute to criminal conduct is crucial, since the current study's findings highlighted the significant impact of interactional effects. Sun, Triplett, and Gauge (2004) found that unsupervised youth groups, low organizational engagement, and sparse local friendship networks are characteristics of neighbourhoods with poor socioeconomic level, significant residential mobility, racial heterogeneity, and family breakdown. Economic hardship has been found to have a significant impact on teenage aggression as well as peer relationships (Eamon, 2001). The social disarray of the neighbourhood in which one lives mediates this effect, which in turn heightens propensity to commit crimes (Seepersad, 2013). People are more likely to engage in such conduct when they have inadequate coping mechanisms and resources in addition to the characteristics and environmental factors (Seepersad, 2013). The general comprehension of the interaction effect implied that social circumstances may interact with personality traits to influence an individual's conduct in a given circumstance, rather than personality being the only factor. Due to financial limitations, the participants in this study were unable to meet their basic needs and lacked access to essential amenities in their community.

V. CONCLUSION

For a long time, psychological viewpoints on crime have been studied independently from mainstream criminology, which evolved into a field dominated by sociological ideas in the second half of the 20th century. There have been claims that this separation is now unworkable. Since crime may be understood in terms of the social processes that create it, criminal behaviour has primarily become a sociological field of study. Although it was simple to disprove the premise that poverty causes crime directly, the idea that social deprivation and crime are somehow related has endured. Criminology experienced what has been called the "aetiological crisis" as crime rates skyrocketed in the West in the second half of the 20th century, coinciding with a sharp rise in overall affluence and the availability of improved housing, healthcare, and educational opportunities. According to Young (1986), "talk of theory, causality, and justice has all but disappeared" as a result of this crisis paralyzing criminological theory. Prevention strategies include addressing the psychological and social causes of crime and violence, enhancing community capacity, and altering surroundings to discourage criminal activity or provide a greater sense of security. A careful strategy will balance and employ a variety of measures that can address certain issues of crime and victimization in the short and long term, but there is no one best way. A policy like this will address the requirements of all sectors while fostering respect for the rule of law and preventing the social and psychological marginalization of specific groups.

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VI. FURTHER WORK

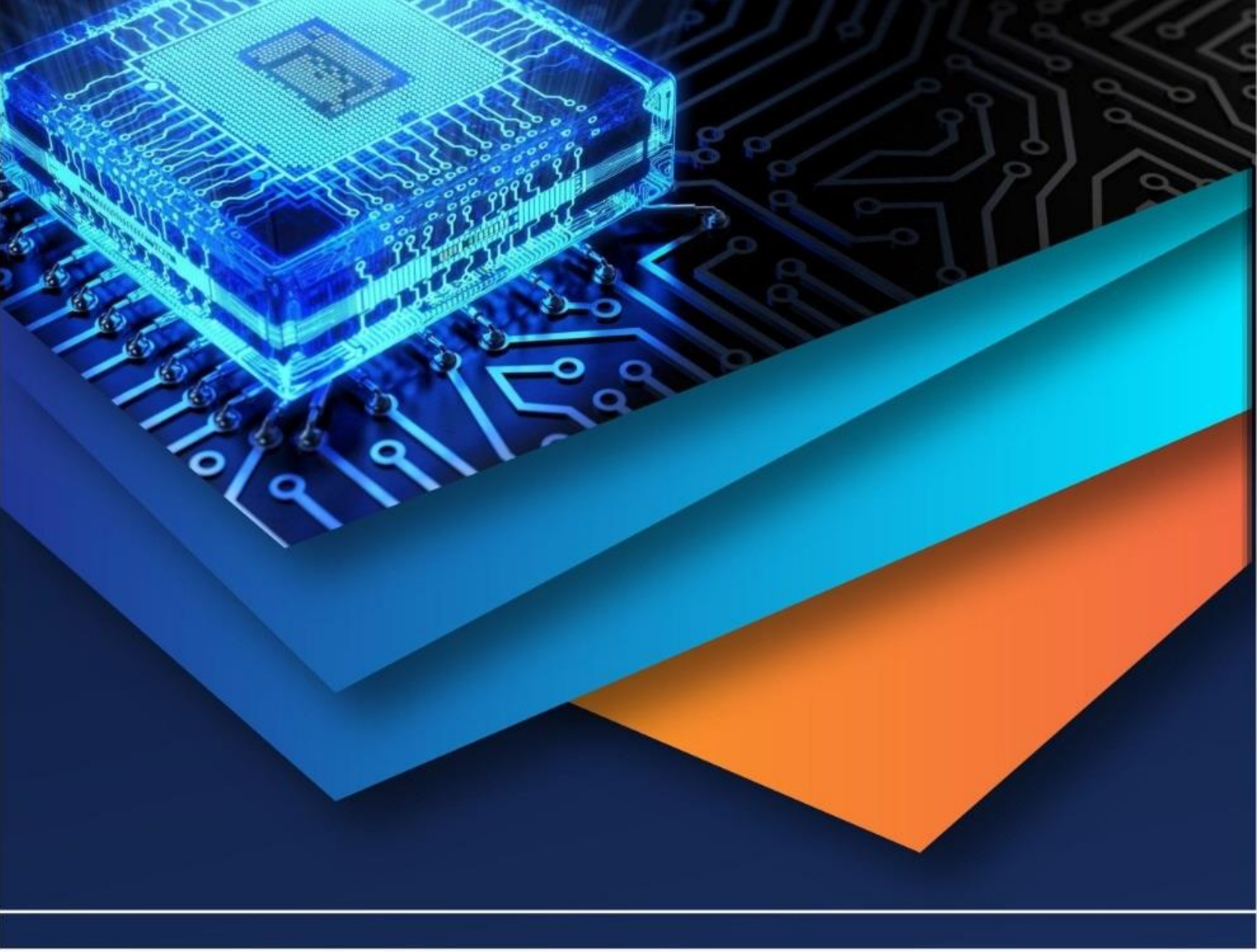
The deeper fusion of criminological theory and psychological viewpoints on criminal conduct. A psychosocial viewpoint that differs from a conventional psychological one is what comes out of this discussion. Compared to traditional psychological approaches, it is evident that the psychosocial perspective that has been used is significantly more methodologically and philosophically eclectic. We are reminded of the importance of the social contexts in which these emotional worlds are rooted by combining models developed in the therapeutic field with research on the private realm of emotions, such as the relevance of shame. It is no longer possible to maintain the gap between criminology and more psychological theories of the individual. The focus of the analysis has switched to "personality" as a result of the changes brought about by shifting social situations. Criminology must adopt the instruments that allow for the study of people's social, emotional, and moral lives if it is to understand the significance of these shifts and make a contribution to discussion and policy.

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