

Silent Signals: A Review on Negative Emotions and Applying Psychology to Forensics In-Depth

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ABSTRACT

While the synchronous association between psychological factors and criminal behavior has been described in the literature, the influence of negative emotions from the context of forensic psychology has received much less attention. We tried to understand the crime from psychological aspects and connect it to the forensic view. A group of selected papers have been classified into three developmental stages according to a number of negative emotions and grouped under each stage. Generally, anger, depression, shame, guilt, fear, stress, frustration etc. are some negative emotions experienced by different developmental ages including childhood, young and adult are pointing out through this study. As evidence for this, the review has selected the most appropriate works to support its conclusions. Besides, it is important to note that crime is a multidisciplinary approach and there are no such writings can be seen in forensic psychological domain. It will be a valuable concern from mental health and psychological context.

Keywords: *Negative Emotions, Psychology, Children, Adolescence, Adult, Mental Health*

Negative emotions are unpleasant feelings experienced in response to perceived threats, losses or adverse circumstances. It can be a strong emotional reaction or response towards particular stimuli which may end up with criminality. In most common, fear, anger, frustration, depression, shame and guilt are considered as negative psychological dynamics and an individual might be experienced in their developmental phases. Negative emotional outputs can vary based on personality traits, coping styles and past experiences. Emotions, when not effectively managed, can lead individuals to engage in criminal behaviors. A person will pass through the different stages of life namely, childhood, youth and adult. Moreover, behavioral intentions are moderated by anger and fear (fight or flight), and provide a lens for evaluating criminogenic opportunities (Barnum & Solomon, 2019).

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According to General Strain Theory (GST), crime is a byproduct of negative emotion like strain (stress) and there must be a relationship between stress, anger and aggression. Anger significantly influences all indicators of criminal conduct, and crime is not always motivated by the desire to get goals. Crime is also related to anger and frustration (Agnew, 2017). When we compare a stressful life with conformity, there is a coping condition with negative environment which leads to crime. Despite being one of the most basic emotions, anger is often misinterpreted and sometimes ignored (Tonnaer et al., 2017). Some individuals turn to crime as a means of escaping the emotional pain caused by psychological distress. This causes various emotional states like low self-esteem, hopelessness, insecurity, low self-control etc.

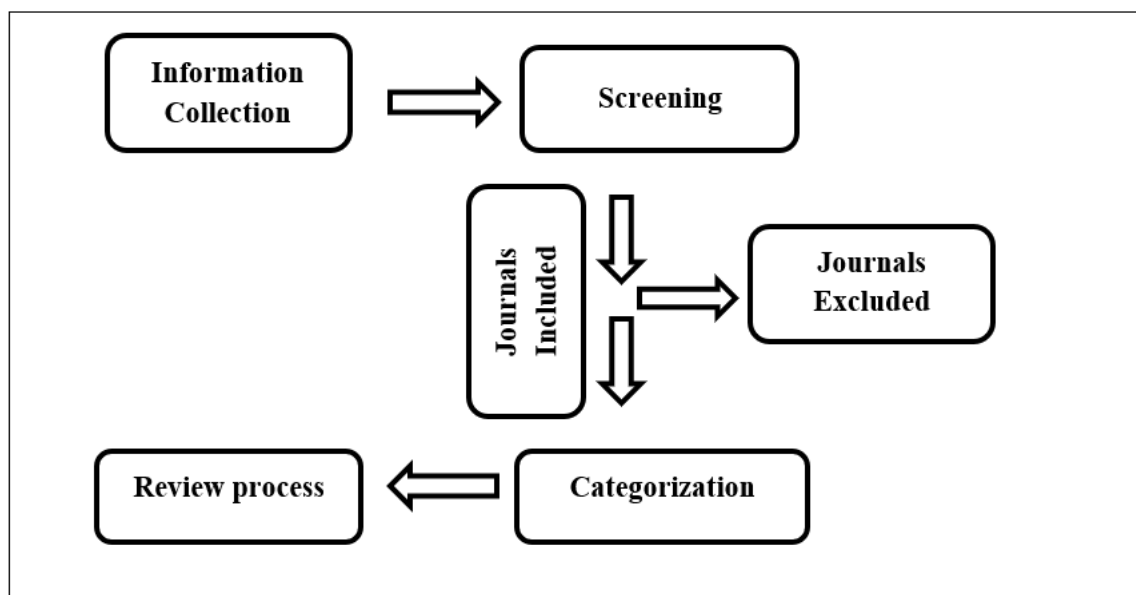
Anger and aggression are closely related phenomena, and it is not possible to discuss one without the other (“Anger and Aggression,” n.d.). Anger is a normal and natural emotion experienced by everyone at times. Aggression in psychology is a behavior that can result from anger. It involves actions intended to cause harm or damage to someone or something. Negative emotions and psychological dynamics triggered by personal conflicts, perceived injustices or socio-economic factors can lead people to engage in offensive behavior. These all are viewed in socio-psychological aspect but not in forensic domain. We are trying to upholding the truth behind the linkage between negative emotions and criminal activities in forensic psychology.

Children moral and emotional styles seem to be well established at middle childhood with clear downstream consequences for risky behavior in early adulthood. Shame and guilt proneness at childhood are the risk factors for later deviant behavior (Stuewig et al., 2014). It would be more accurate to say that the deviants have closed to negative emotions and sometimes it leads to adulthood criminality. We can clearly estimate the relation between different developmental phases of individual and their psychological dynamics. The psychopathic traits and dilemmas are not only included in psychiatry but can also be included in forensic psychology (Lee & Kim, 2020). The children, youth and adults have the tendency to inculcate their emotions to others negatively. When we considering this from different parameters can notice negativity may vary according to the age categories.

METHOD

Archival method was carried out to yield the results on the topic of interest. A number of relevant publications include journals and articles were used to connect the negative emotions and criminality with forensic psychology. We entered the keyword ‘negative emotions’ into search engines combined with the terms delinquency-child, deviance-youth, crime-adult, forensic psychology etc. PubMed, Google Scholar and Web of Science were mainly used as data collection platform. Finally, a comprehensive review of literatures has been done by following process such as data collection, article selection, categorization etc. and it is shown in Figure.1

Figure.1 Conceptual representation of review process



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Negative emotions can contribute to criminality across different developmental stages such as childhood, adolescence and adulthood by influencing coping strategies, peers, parental interaction, identity formation, and fewer consequences. All these causes are explaining in sociological perspective in already existing literatures. However, we need more justification in this area from psychological perspective. Authors attributed their findings through studies to explore sociological and psychiatric relevance with regard to negative emotions. Even though, we don't forget to realize the fact that the criminality due to psychological dynamics is nothing without forensic realm.

Link between Negative emotions and Children with reference to Forensic Psychology

Understanding crime's path from Fear, Shame and Guilt and Anger and Frustration

A study was conducted in regards to the linkage between poor fear conditioning in early childhood and adult crime (Gao et al., 2009). This was the first study to investigate the relationship between early-life fear conditioning and the propensity for adult crime. Here, the authors selected 'fear' as a negative emotion which causes criminality. Amygdala, the emotion processing center, was the main domain conditioning the fear in childhood and later fear become the reason for criminal acts. They tried to connect the emotion (fear) with neurodevelopmental aspects of criminal offending. For this, the authors developed a case-control design in which they've compared 137 (male-131, female-6) criminal records with 274 non-criminals and also assessed electrodermal fear conditioning in a group of 1795 children at age 3 (selected on the basis of vaccination record), and came to know that criminal offending at age 23. To discover the findings, the study aimed to search the official court record of crime registration including property crime, petty offences, drug abuse, violence etc. At last, the study proposed its conclusion as poor fear conditioning at age 3 induces the crime at age 23.

Even so, Shame and guilt are considered as distinct negative emotions which promoting several motivations or criminal tendencies (Stuewig et al., 2014). Shame in childhood causes risky behaviors in later adolescence and guilt predicts negative to it. A longitudinal study

was conducted in this area among 380 children and their parents. The study focused on children in the age range of 10-12 and measured proneness to guilt and shame, later on conducted an interview for 68 per cent of participants crossed 18 years of age by three phases (wave 1-5th grade, wave 2-7/8th grade and wave 3-<18). In wave 1 they've collected basic demographic details from children's parents in childhood and in wave 2 it was re-interviewed. The last wave was to assess risky and illegal behavior through telephonic interview. And finally they valued wave 1 and 3 results of 258 participants across variety of domains such as substance abuse, sexual activities and participation in Criminal Justice System through regression analysis. As its findings, authors concluded that the connection between shame proneness in childhood and illegal behaviors in adulthood are interrelated and it continue to do so as adults.

Just as same, in 2001 a literature has been published on aggressive behavior with reference to anger in school childrens' based on General Strain Theory. The data collected from national sample of public high school to check the angry level of students. At the end their findings said anger in school children causing high risk of aggressive behavior in schools (Brezina et al., 2001). A similar study was conducted after 19 years to discover the level of anger and aggression in school children by using the tools aggression scale, personal information form and anger expression styles scale. It was done in connection with substance abuse. The authors focused to reveal the concept that substance abuse causes negative anger and it will be the reason for deviance and delinquent behavior (Kaplan & Çuhadar, 2020).

In the opinion of authors on bullying and delinquency, the child becomes delinquent by negative emotions (Anger and frustration) due to bullying (C. Lee et al., 2020). They've collected 2670 data from high schools to prove their statement. The students experienced anger and frustration through cyber or verbal bullying, shown high tendency to participate in delinquent behavior. While, there are number of studies have been done in the area of victimology and criminology, but the transformation from victimization to perpetration is rare. Lee and Kim were identified the role of anger and depression in this transformation by studying Korean child youth and data collected from youth panel survey about 2283 in total including 8th grade students. Statistical methods such as structural equation modeling and bootstrapping were used to test the hypothesis and chi-square for analysis. They've formulated the idea that anger and depression serve as mediator in the transformation of perpetration from victimization (Y. Lee & Kim, 2016).

Then again considering negative emotion, frustration takes a part of it. In accordance with that, there was a study in 2022 conducted among delinquent juveniles to assess the frustration level and compare it with non-delinquents (Chaturvedi et al., 2022). The authors were tested and compared 200 delinquents with 200 non-delinquents through purposive sampling on the basis frustration modes, which drawn the result as positive frustration from Chauhan and Tiwari test with high scores among delinquents. The result of the study holds up the theory of frustration leads to aggression by Dollard and Miller.

Nevertheless it has been shown that facial emotion and affective prosody have high risk of future criminal behavior among children according to (Van Zonneveld et al., 2018). The authors did a study in this area with the help of facial emotion recognition test and prosody test for child of 8-12 years old, among 219 total participants 89 per cent were male. With relevance to our study, we considered negative emotion as facial and vocal recognition of

anger, fear and sad. Due to the changes in psychological dynamics, the samples of children showing negative emotions have high risk of engaging in future criminal behavior.

Link between Negative emotions and Youth with reference to Forensic Psychology

Crime's paths through Depression, Fear, worries, shame, guilt, stress, anger and anxiety

With the purpose of evaluating the long-term relationship between depression and violence among youth a study was conducted by authors and the data were used from different cohorts. The different methods were used through multiple sample approach to come up with the conclusion of depression in adolescents and young adults causing violent behavior in their future (Yu et al., 2017). Likewise, another study (Anderson et al., 2014) has been spoken about depression and youth offending. We can say that most of the studies have been formulated on the subjectivity of psychopathic trait and mental health problems but not about emotions. To solve this problem the authors were took a particular emotion (depression) into consideration.

In recent years, the emotions are demonstrated through psychiatric and sociological perspectives, in order to establish the genuineness the authors were conducted a study on worrying youth and adult criminality (Cops et al., 2011). The study is concentrating more about fear as negative emotion and its implications in future criminal activities. For this, 1121 samples were collected from adolescents of age 19-24 and offered a new thought of youth criminal behavior as a result of fear of crime.

In the array of emotions related studies, crime due to anticipated shame and guilt among adolescents is noted. The emotion in psychology became linked to social aspects of parental monitoring, peers and families with criminality. The data derived from 843 adolescents in The Hague, were used and gave the idea on strong impact of offence by negative emotions like shame and guilt (Svensson et al., 2013). The authors clearly focused on connecting shame and guilt with criminality without any compromise.

Furthermore, there are lot of studies have been raised in this field in connection with sociological and psychological aspects, but not in forensic sight. To merge this gap the researchers have been conducted an empirical study on stress, anger and anxiety which lead to delinquency (Aseltine et al., 2000). The writers have considered Agnew's General Strain theory to prove their subject through collecting 939 samples from youths. From their findings, we can able to relate the idea that the boys who have from low socio-economic background been experienced high level of stress and it promotes them to conduct illegal activities. Likewise, the researchers put to use negative emotions in adolescence to declare their statements through another study by using general strain theory. They've concentrated on adolescent maltreatment and delinquent behavior in connection with emotions like anger, anxiety and depression (Hollist et al., 2009).

In contradiction with expressing negative emotion, it is not only the concept relating to offence, reluctant to show the emotions will also causing some type of physical aggression and criminality, in urban adolescents (Sullivan et al., 2009). A study was framed to forward this idea by examining the association between sadness, anger, emotional expression and physical aggression. The researchers have collected samples for their study through face to face interview from young girls and boys. The regression line stated that high expressive reluctance of emotions in youth motivates the risk of relative and physical aggression.

Link between Negative emotions and Adult with reference to Forensic Psychology

Identifying Criminality through Anger, Jealousy and Frustration

A positive correlation has been found between negative emotionality and physical aggression (Garofalo & Velotti, 2017) however, Intimate Partner Violence is sometimes an ignored reality. Anger can predict long term effect of offending in Partner Violent men (Farzan-Kashani & Murphy, 2015). To determine this anger role in partner violent men, 132 data were collected from community based domestic violence agency and detected the recidivism during 8 year time interval. Specific anger scale was used as research tool and the result shows low anger control in tool denotes high level of general violence and its expression cause recidivism. But Anger, not jealousy, was frequently identified as the main factor contributing to tense relationships between spouses, it can be dragging the domestic violence (Keetley, 2008). In addition to this, a study proves 'anger out' is designed to determine the extent to which individuals or subjects tend to express their anger by acting physically or verbally aggressively against others or subjects (C. I. Eckhardt et al., 2004). A similar finding has been noted in the opinion of Averill which proves anger is directly proportional to aggression after 8 years. In his book, the chapter anger and aggression offer anger as an unpleasant experience in adult which is often criticized as antisocial ("Anger and Aggression," n.d.).

With regard to adult, Cynkier studied jealousy and its influence on homicide by analyzing erotic jealousy in domestic violence. According to him, it is a type of psychiatric condition which is amplified by negative emotions and offer growing conflicts (Cynkier, 2017). Aggression towards ladies connected with their sexual "misconduct" is more common by gents, which the author criticizes in the point of jealousy. Furthermore, neurotic kinds of jealousy that lead to a crime of passion are examined in a research, it states that the end product of jealousy is murder (Evzonas, 2018). With all these, viewing negative emotions as a serious problem, authors Munyo and Rossi conducted a search linking different emotions of frustration and euphoria to violent crime. Through their study, they've concentrated on finding that frustration stimulates violence, while euphoria reduces the likelihood of it (Munyo & Rossi, 2013) by collecting the data (<835000 felonies) from police stations from 2002 to 2010. But in original frustration-aggression hypothesis, the study suggested any frustration definitely prompts aggression and any act of aggression is because of frustration (Al, 2013).

CONCLUSION

When examining the forensic significance of an offender's negative emotions, it's important to determine whether these feelings are indicative of a mental illness or are morbid in and of themselves. Additionally, it's important to determine how relevant the negative emotions are to the arguments that made. Hence, we give thought to this area for getting more attention in forensic psychology. Psychology of offence is dynamic. To justify the negative emotion as psychological drive for criminality we used the variables including anger, frustration, jealousy, shame, guilt, depression and fear through different ages. In the comparative phase of this study, youths and children are more susceptible than adults to the effects emotions which might lead to criminal activities. In conclusion, it is clear that emotional dysregulation can serve as a trigger for criminal activity, and treating emotional control may be essential to reducing the likelihood of criminal behavior. The results highlight how these emotions play in shaping offensive behavior. In moving forward, future research should continue to explore the specific mechanisms through which negative emotions contribute to criminality, taking into account diverse populations and psychological motives.

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Conflict of Interest

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