

Level of Impulse, Ego and Super Ego among Criminals and Noncriminals

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ABSTRACT

Crime is inevitable in any human society since some violation or the other of any code of conduct prescribed for the members of a society is bound to occur. Not only is crime evitable but also, paradoxical as it may sound, some sociologists have gone the extent of saying that crime, to some extent helps in promoting social solidarity among people constituting the society. Main objectives of the present research work are to assess the level of impulse, ego and superego among criminals and non-criminals. The measuring instrument is based on a psychoanalytic theory by Dombrose and Morton S. Slobien (1958). It consists of 4 subtests. The incidental purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample for the present study. In the present study, a sample of 100 male persons was taken – 50 criminals and 50 non-criminals. The age range of the subjects was 20-25 years. Results of the present study show that the impulses are higher among criminals on almost all the sub tests. On contrary, Ego and Superego scores are higher for non-criminals groups. It can be said that criminals have strong impulse regarding immediate gratification and while in process of achievements of their goals.

Key words: *Impulses, Ego, Superego, Crime, Criminals, Criminal Behaviour.*

Crime is inevitable in any human society since some violation or the other of any code of conduct prescribed for the members of a society is bound to occur. Not only is crime evitable but also,

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paradoxical as it may sound, some sociologists have gone the extent of saying that crime, to some extent helps in promoting social solidarity among people constituting the society.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that crime is a phenomenon, which is of primary concern to every member of the human society. The concern for crimes and criminals is reflected in various forms of curiosity among people. First, there is the idle curiosity in certain minds where the object is not so much to understand something seriously about crime but just to get some sort of thrill or kick out of it. This need is generally catered to by horror comics, movies based on violence and through other means of mass media. There are many who expect spicy crime reporting in their newspapers just as they would expect their breakfast every morning. It is curious fact of life that crime, something horrible in itself, should provide so much relief and recreation to many when written about in fiction or portrayed in movies or on television.

Elements of Crime:

In order to differentiate the criminal behaviour from the non-criminal behaviour, Hall (1947) has proposed the following criteria –

1. It has internal consequence.
2. It is legally forbidden.
3. It is an intentional or reckless action.
4. It involves “criminal intent”.
5. It involves fusion of conduct and criminal intent.
6. It has ‘casual’ relation between the legally forbidden harm and the voluntary misconduct.
7. It has legally prescribed punishment.

Some of the most studied researches into the origins of crime and personality have been done by Professor Hans Eysenck, who spent years defining whether criminal behavior had any

relationship with personality. He identified that personalities have three dimensions. First, psychoticism describes people as being aggressive, egocentric, and impulsive. Second, neuroticism describes people with low self-esteem, anxiety, and wide mood swings. The third is extroversion, which describes the personality of an individual who is sensation-seeking, dominant, and assertive. A majority of these traits are found in criminals, which have been studied and classified (Eysenck, 1971, 1977 & Sammons).

The role of age:

The thinking and behaviour of the youth today has been affected by a number of factors. Some of these are: expansion of education, increasing unemployment, reservation policy of the government ignoring merit of a section of the youth, lack of adequate attention and guidance by parents, tremendous and not very wholesome influence of the mass media, the newly acquired affluence of some young people, failure of educational institutions in imparting value-oriented education, questionable influence of the peer group at an intermediate stage between leaving the protection of the family with its distinctive patterns of behaviour, and entering the increasingly impersonal and competitive wider society. (Ahuja, 1996).

Psychoanalytic approach:

The psychoanalytic approach is based on certain concepts formulated by Sigmund Freud. According to him, id is the source of basic biological drives in a human being and is present at the time of birth and also operates in the unconscious state. Throughout life and id constantly seeks expression of a social drive. The viewpoint that we are all potential criminals is not peculiar to psychoanalytic approach alone but has been expressed by many other philosophers and writers. The great German thinker *Goethe* observed once: “There is no crime of which I do

not deem myself capable.” *Dostoievsky* in his novel ‘The Brothers Karamaov’ wrote: “Nobody in the world can be the judge of the criminal before he has realized that he himself is a much a criminal as one who confronts him. Everyone pretends to hate evil’ but deep down they all like it, all of them.”

Parry and Lindsay (2003) aimed to explore the hypothesis by assessing levels of impulsiveness in sexual offenders, non-sexual offenders and non-offenders with mild Id method. This study did not support the hypothesis that sexual offending by people with Id is better explained by impulsive behaviour rather than sexual deviancy.

Kruel and Drummond (2002) reported that in public institution that works with adolescents who have committed infractions and the application of penalties that restricts the freedom of these adolescents, the psychoanalytical concept incompleteness has furnished the basis for an educational project. They further said that psychoanalysis teaches us to work through the demands that are made by our patients so as to bring the unconscious wish to the surface. They associated violence with the notion of wholeness; therefore the acknowledgement of vulnerability and lack can actually restrain violence.

Kamaluddin et al. (2015) reviewed four psychological traits on the basis of an archival research methodology. Results indicated that four psychological traits: Personality traits, low self-control, aggressive behavior, and cognitive distortion act as the major psychological factor underlying criminal behavior within an individual.

Aggarwal et al.(2015) reported on fifty consecutive participants diagnosed as per the International Classification of Diseases-10 criteria for substance abuse to find the relationship between

personality characteristics and criminal behavior in the substance abusers. The role of various socio-demographic variables in substance abusers, which affected their criminal behavior, was also studied and it was found that personality characteristics of the substance abusers differed significantly from the normal controls, and the number of variables including occupational status, socioeconomic status, family history of substance use, and type of substance abuse significantly correlated with the criminal behavior in the substance abusers.

Problem:

The present investigation attempts to study the “***Level of Impulse, Ego and Super Ego among Criminals and Noncriminals***”.

Conceptual clarification:

In spelling out the specific terms involved in the present study like impulse, Ego and Superego operational definitions of these concepts are given below:

Impulse: The impulse popularly known as the Id is the link between somatic and mental processes. It is somewhat indirect contact with the somatic processes, and takes over from them instinctual needs and gives them mental expression. The Id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism life, namely the immediate satisfaction of its innate needs.

Ego: The ego is part of the personality that mediates the demands of the reality. The ego prevents us from acting on our basic urges.

Superego: The superego is the ethical component of the personality and provides the moral standards by which the ego operates.

Criminal Behaviour: Criminal behaviour may be defined as antisocial conduct that violates established law and entails some penalty.

Objectives:

- To assess the level of impulse among criminals and non-criminals.
- To assess the level of Ego among criminals and non-criminals
- To assess the level of Superego among criminals and non-criminals.

Hypotheses:

In order to find out the level of impulse, ego and superego among criminals and non-criminals, certainly expected relationship formulations are made. For the present study, the following alternative hypotheses are formulated:

- The level of impulse will be higher among criminals than non-criminals.
- The level of ego and superego will be higher among non-criminals.

The rationale of the hypotheses:

The rationale of the above hypotheses is that the criminals of high-ego-strength are characterized by an absence of neurotic anxiety, mildly rebellious and nonconforming, socially outgoing without close personal ties, strong emphasis on masculinity, good ego strength, a normal amount of defensiveness, and a tendency towards abstract interests; the low-ego-strength among criminals is characterized by poor self-concept, poor ego-strength, moderate depression and pessimism, more than average number of somatic concerns, rigidity and compulsiveness, eccentricity, and withdrawal, unusual personal experience, high activity level, shyness, a dissatisfaction with interpersonal relationships and a high potential for rebelliousness and nonconformity (*Kodman and Hopkins, 1970*).

Design:

The present research work is not possible experimentally because of nature of the investigation. The researcher adopted the quantitative descriptive research for gaining the objectives of the present study. It is the survey quantitative research in which the event has already occurred and the effects of the variables were studied by qualitative analysis.

Controls:

Following controls were taken into account:

- All the subjects selected for the present investigation were those who committed a crime for the first time.
- All the criminals who were selected came under the Indian Penal Code.
- The sequence of the test was similar for all the subjects.
- For all the four Jails, care has been taken that conditions of testing should remain same.

Sample:

The incidental purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample for the present study. In the present study, a sample of 100 male persons was taken – 50 criminals and 50 non-criminals. The age range of the subjects was 20-25 years. The criminals were selected from different central jails of Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur cities of Rajasthan state. Only those criminals were selected who had similar kind of crime under Indian Penal Code (Sec.324, 323, 484) and having not completed their sentences more than six months.

Tool:

IES Test: The measuring instrument is based on a psychoanalytic theory by *Dombrose* and *Morton S. Slobien* (1958). It consists of 4 subtests.

➤ **The Picture Story Completion Test:** Picture story completion test is (PSC) . Comprises of 13 sets of cartoons. In each set, two or three cartoons begins a story. The subject is instructed to complete each story by selecting one picture from three choices provided. These choices permit one impulse expressive, one ego integrating or one superego inhibiting ending for the initiated stories and scored accordingly. With this test, it is assumed that the subjects' choices of response will be related in some way to the comparative strength of his own impulses ego and superego and to his handling of them.

➤ **Photo Analysis Test:** The photo analysis test (Ph a) consist of men's photographs. Two questions are asked about the behaviour and feeling of the men pictured and three plausible answers are provided for each question. The three answer choices give the subject an opportunity to assign a characteristic of impulse released ego controlled and superego restrained behaviour to each photograph.

➤ **Picture Title Test:** The picture title test (PT) consist of 12 drawings each showing activities and object which may be classified into impulse and superego categories, subjects are directed to give a most fitting name or title to each picture. The picture title test requires the subject to create a response of his own to project something of himself upon the picture.

➤ **Arrow Dot Test:** The arrow dot test (AD) is a perceptual motor test requiring the solution of 23 relatively simple graphic problems. The subject is directed to draw the shortest possible line from the point of the arrow to a dot between which are interspersed a variety of solid lines and block bars defined as a barrier by instruction. The general rationale for the use and scoring of this test rests upon graphic, symbolic representations. The arrow is considered a representative of impulse forces, not only because of its symbolic use in our culture but also on the basis of the instructions, which require an active extension of the arrow to the dot.

Procedure:

Each subject was given two tests in different sessions individually by the investigator. A gap of few minutes was given after every administration. Tests were administered in a counterbalanced manner for all the subjects of the two groups. All the tests were administered under proper and adequate testing conditions. All the instructions were strictly followed which were given by the authors of the respective tests. Each session ended with an expression of thanks to the subject for their cooperation.

Scoring:

Scoring of the data was done with the help of stencils and manuals available for the tests in the present study. The data has been arranged in the respective tables according to the statistical test applied.

Statistical Analysis:

In the present study, to find out the significant difference between the criminals and non-criminals group student ‘t’ test mean and the standard deviation was used.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Showing Mean, SD and ‘t’ values on Id, Ego and Superego test between criminal and non-criminal group of 20-25 years.

IES Test	Measure s	Criminals (N=50)		Non-Criminals (N=50)		‘t’	Significance Level
		M	SD	M	SD		
Arrow Dot	Id	7.82	3.56	5.26	1.86	4.57	p<.01
	Ego	13.56	3.65	14.54	2.19	1.63	NS
	Superego	1.62	1.19	3.18	1.58	5.77	p<.01
Picture	Id	3.08	1.2	2.28	1.7	2.0	p<.05

IES Test	Measure s	Criminals (N=50)		Non-Criminals (N=50)		t'	Significance Level
		M	SD	M	SD		
Story Completion			1		1	5	
	Ego	7.30	2.29	7.74	2.07	1.02	NS
	Superego	2.62	1.17	2.98	1.28	1.50	NS
Photo Analysis	Id	3.42	2.10	3.68	1.94	0.65	NS
	Ego	9.42	2.23	9.50	2.50	0.17	NS
	Superego	5.18	1.92	4.82	1.68	0.90	NS
Picture Title	Id	5.80	1.69	4.25	1.20	5.34	p<.01
	Ego	4.02	1.64	5.92	1.32	3.10	p<.01
	Superego	2.20	1.37	3.00	1.35	2.40	p<.05

It is clear from the Table-1 that criminals have obtained high mean scores on Arrow Dot dimension of IES Test. Id differs significantly from non-criminals ($t=4.57, p<.01$). Mean scores of criminals ($M=7.82, SD=3.56$) are higher than non-criminals ($M=5.26, SD=1.86$) on personality trait Id. It means that criminals want their needs to be satisfied immediately and directly without due consideration for realistic restrictions or concern for morality and they are impulsive in nature. The non-criminals have obtained high mean scores ($M=3.18, SD=1.58$) on Arrow Dot dimension of IES Test as compared to criminals ($M=1.62, SD=1.19$). Superego differ significantly from the criminals ($t=5.77, p<.01$). It means that the non-criminals pay more needs to their moral values and wish to play the role of “do gooder” which could be inferred from their mean scores.

It is evident from Table that significant difference is to be found between groups of criminals and non-criminals on picture story completion for Id. The criminals have obtained high mean 3.08 (SD=1.21) than the non-criminals 2.28 (SD=1.71) respectively. 't' ratio is reported significant ('t' = 2.05, $p < .05$). It indicates that the criminals reveal a considerable amount of externalisation of impulses by foisting them upon the external world. On the other hand scores of Ego and Superego, both the groups do not differ significantly.

On Picture analysis dimension Id, Ego and Superego have not shown any significant difference between the criminals and the non-criminals.

A look over of table revealed that Mean score of criminals and non-criminals differed significantly with each other on picture title Id domain. The calculated independent sample 't' value is significant ('t'=5.34, $p < .01$). The mean value obtained by criminals and non-criminals for Id are $M=5.80$ (SD=1.69) and $M=4.25$ (SD=1.20) respectively. It indicates that they lead a fantasy life laden with material satisfying to the impulses.

It is also interesting to note that table indicates that significant mean difference is to be found between criminals and non-criminals on picture title domain ego ('t'=3.10, $p < .01$). Non-criminal group scores higher mean ($M=5.92$, SD=1.32) as compared to criminals ($M=4.02$, SD=1.64). It depicts that the non-criminals have a strong ego level and able to exercise good judgment.

Similarly, on picture title sub-test, the Superego scores that are obtained by the non-criminal group ($M=3.00$, SD=1.35) are significantly higher than the criminals ($M=2.20$, SD=1.35). The 't' value is reported significant ($t=2.40$, $p < .05$). It indicates the

awareness and recognition of superego standards with accompanying feelings of being 'good' and being 'bad' by the non-criminals.

In the present investigation level of impulse, ego and super-ego among criminals and non-criminals were studied. It was hypothesized that level of impulse will be higher among criminals than non-criminals and Level of ego and superego will be higher among non-criminals. Thus, on the basis of above findings, both the hypotheses are accepted. It can be said that criminals have strong impulse regarding immediate gratification and while in the process of achievement of their needs they didn't care the rules and regulations of the society.

CONCLUSION

Many Studies from outside of India strongly advocates how personality influences criminal behaviour as well as activities. In this connection, the study of Lombroso (1836–1909), who is regarded as the father of criminology, developed a theory that some people are genetically closer to their primate ancestors than others. Further, he also concluded that criminals had distinguishing physical features that set them apart from noncriminal population. In continuation with these studies, the results of the present study also found consistent, the present study supports the view that criminals differ from non-criminals in terms of personality features of a psychoanalytic approach like Impulse, Ego and Superego. These traits have also discriminated and predictive validity for future recidivism. However, there is a dearth of literature (Sinha, 2016) in this field. Hence, there is a considerable gap in this area, and it is suggested that more research studies are needed.

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