

Rational choice theory of crime report examples

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



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This is a theory that seeks to reveal the circumstances that make a person commit a crime. It a theory based on the principle of cost-benefit analysis. It argues that just like any other rational person, a criminal will have to calculate the costs and benefits of a crime.

Effect

This is a produce of an event. It is a key factor to a criminal. He will have to weigh the value of the incurred costs and the resulting effects. It is cardinal to take into account that a criminal commits crime as a beneficial activity. This is the basic assumption that is propagated by this theory. Therefore, a criminal will be conscious of the effects of his criminal acts. An act is only criminal if it is expressly prohibited by law.

Payoff

This is the award derived from the anti-social behavior. According to advocates of this theory, the payoff should be beneficial to the person committing the crime. Moreover, the payoff should be able to compensate the criminal the cost incurred during the commission of the crime. If the payoff is less compared to the cost that will be requisite to execute the deviant acts, the criminal will be discouraged to carry on with it. However, if the payoff is worth the trouble, then a criminal will be expected to commit the deviant acts.

Peer support

This is extremely relevant because it has the capacity to influence rational choice theory. A person with peer support will have the motivation to do any acts that he or she feels comfortable. However, the reverse is true for those without peer support. It is important to realize that numerous criminal activities get committed by groups of people. Moreover, despite a person having to calculate the cost-benefit analysis, some benefits may not be material. A person may commit a crime because of peer support just to appease his peers.

Punishment

This is a critical ingredient that will aid a criminal during decision making. The surety of being punished can significantly reduce the chances of a person committing a crime. On the hand, if a person is sure he will not be punished, he or she will commit a crime. Therefore, the certainty of punishment is the only sure way to deter a criminal from committing a crime.

However, if he or she finds out that there are ways in which one cannot be punished, then most likely one will employ such tricks to escape punishment.

Risk of Apprehension

Being arrested can be scary especially if the offense committed by the suspect has tough sanctions under the law. Therefore, the risk of apprehension has a relative consideration depending on what crime has been committed by the offender. Nevertheless, a person will not commit a crime if he is sure he will be arrested. This is in accordance with the theory that a person will think rationally of his cost and benefits before committing a crime.

Needs of the Offender

Most crimes are needs driven. People commit crimes because they have certain needs and wants that they want to fulfill. Before one commits a crime he will debate whether his actions will cater for his needs. This will be a primal condition.

References

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