

Freud and eysenck's theories of crime



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Introduction

By studying the work of criminologist's Freud and Eysenck, this essay will consist of me looking at key psychological factors, I will look at the strengths and limitations of their personality theories of crime. I will put forward a wide range of explanations, by studying the work of the criminologists and trying to understand the causes of crime, for example psychological issues.

Psychology relates to the study of peoples' mind. Psychological theories of crime look at the differences in individual behaviour and how that makes it more likely for individuals to commit a criminal act. The reason for these differences may be due to personality characteristics, biological factors, or social connections. (Freud, S. 1961)

Psychodynamic explanations of crime and criminal behaviour have their origins, by looking at the significant work of Sigmund Freud (1956-1939). The psychoanalytical model developed by Freud in which he believes that a human progresses, early in life. Freud comes to say the human personality has three sets of interacting forces. These include the id, the ego and the superego. These are three components in a human personality that initiate them to behave in the manner they do and make individuals what they are.

Firstly the id which is believed to be primitive, which supply's unconscious drives for food and sex. The id triggers humans to do all the things that feel good, regardless if they are wrong. A child who is cries when they are hungry, this is the id triggering the child for the needs to be met. Secondly,

is the superego which contains the conscience. According to Freud the superego consists of values and morals internalised through a person's life.

The super ego merges between the id and ego. It helps individuals feel good about something they have done right and feel guilty for something they have done wrong. Thirdly, the ego or the conscious personality, this personality component helps humans face reality by adjudicating between the other two components id and superego.

Ego helps individuals not to follow every desire they have which is created by the id. This component allows the principle of reality which guides improper sexual and aggressive drives to suitable intentions. The ego is something that is learnt.

Freud believes humans are born with their id. Freud believes the id holds importance to the personality, for example the id allows a newborn to get its needs met by crying. The id is set on getting pleasure; the id wants whatever feels good despite the outcome of the situation being bad.

By looking at the example of a child who will cry to meet his satisfactions, this is a good way to explain how the id works; the id will speak until the needs are met. The id just wants to meet its own satisfaction without any consideration about reality. Looking at babies who are inconsiderate to their parents, whether their parents are sleeping eating etc if they want something they will cry for it until they get it. This shows if the id wants something, nothing else is important.

During the child developing through life the second component of the personality develops. This is known as the ego, the ego looks at the reality theory. Not like the id the ego is more considerate it understands feeling and emotions of others and takes them into account. Therefore the ego meets the needs of the id, at the same time looking at the reality of the condition.

By the time a child is five the development of the third personality component develops. Freud called this Superego. The superego is seen as the honest part of humans. It determines what is right or wrong by looking the moral and ethical barriers placed by people around us.

The ego according to Freud is the most powerful component. Freud believes that the ego complies with the desires of the id and the superego. At the same time the ego relates on the factors of reality. Freud believed that if the id gets a strong desire and self satisfaction obtains an individual's life. The stronger the superego is, the more an individual will be driven to harsh ethics.

By looking at the development of the superego, it is said that the superego acts on the ego. The superego is believed to internally have rules and punishments; the superego praises and punishes the child in the same way as the parents. This then builds up to the child learning what is right and wrong.

The id works for pleasure and superego wants control; the relationship with parents is seen as important. Assumed that the failure to develop a superego was the result of the parents being unloving or absent for much of the child's upbringing (Aichhorn, 1963). Nevertheless having parents who are kind and

caring could have the same effect. Freud's theory concludes around the idea that inner, dynamic forces influence human behaviour.

On the other hand Eysenck was one in many psychologists to study personality. Eysenck's personality theory was different. Eysenck based it upon psychological concepts of conditioning whereas Freud's theory was based on conscience, but Eysenck viewed the concept very differently. Eysenck believes there is a biological basis to personality. Were individuals are genetically predestined. Eysenck believes individuals tend to learn the rules and norms of society through conscious. This is obtained through happenings in life, when involved in certain situations. He goes on to say the good receive rewards and the bad or unexpected are punished.

Eysenck also believes there are three dimensions to a personality. Firstly extraversion which is said to have two components impulsiveness and sociability, each of which are independent of each other. Eysenck looked at extroversion as individuals who enjoy 'positive events' especially social events, they are seen to enjoy involvement in gatherings e. g. parties. They enjoy mixing in with others and talking rather than being on their own. Extraverts are seen to 'fade' if they are on their own or bored. People who are extraverts enjoy interacting with other and are seen to be assertive and talkative.

Extraversion in individuals allows them to spend more time with people and less time on their own. They are seen to have a more positive approach and are more energised when people are around. They are seen to take risks and hold leadership abilities.

Low extraversion is expressed as introversion. This is totally opposite to extroversion. Example of introverts are writers, artist etc. People with high introversion are only concerned and interested in their own psychological life. Introverts enjoy spending time on their own, for example they enjoy reading and writing rather than engaging in activities such as social gatherings. Introverts are seen to be 'low key'.

Introverts enjoy observing situations before they take part, they allow themselves to concentrate on a certain activity or person before they get involved or take part in another. Introverts should not be considered as shy people, due to them as individuals enjoying time spent by themselves; they don't hold fear of mixing in with people. Due to their own preference they enjoy time spent on their own.

Eysenck referred neuroticism or instability to individuals who have negative emotions, such as people who are moody, anxious, and highly insensitive. Stability then is the lack of this behaviour. Individuals with high N are seen as neurotic; whereas someone with a low score would be seen as stable. Eysenck found that women are more neurotic than men.

Little (1963) carried out research by comparing the scores for convicted young offenders on the extroversion and neuroticism scale with those who are non-offenders. The outcome of his research was that there was no difference in relation to extroversion but the offenders scored higher on the neuroticism dimension. Neither element showed the relation of replicate offending.

Eysenck (1977) argues that different combinations of different personality scores within people influence their capability to learn not to offend and therefore the level of offending someone with a high E and high N equals a stable introvert. Introverts are seen as the most effectively conditioned. Eysenck found that stable extroverts and neurotic introverts come somewhere between the two limits in provisions such as conditioning.

Sigmund Freud defined psychoanalysis as “ a method of mind investigation, and especially of the unconscious mind” (Freud 1920). Looking at the relationship between psychoanalysis and crime, Freud created the psychoanalytic theory; this theory is used in criminology to explain crime. Freud's psychoanalytic theory is based on the fact that individuals' welfare of a strong relation between the id, ego and superego. However Freud never had much to say about crime.

This theory is based on the basis of why crime is committed, and the reasons for crime within an individual. Freud based it on the fact that crime is caused by e. g. conflict in individual's early life that leads them to become criminals. Freud's theory suggests that individuals with anti-social tendencies, in the unconscious of their mind, they tend to think back to traumatic events in their early life, which causes long term psychological problems. Another reason why Freud believes individuals become criminals and start committing crimes is due to the id getting out of control.

Freud went on to say that there are three possible reasons for individuals to commit crime which relate to his theory are:

- Strong conscious - which creates guilt within individuals

- Weak conscious - which does not control individual desires and
- Criminal needs for instant pleasure.

Freud's theory suggests that individuals may have tension or disagreements in their mind which lead to guilt. As a result they gain views and feelings inside that make them wanting to be punished. He feels unconscious differences reason crime.

Displacement according to Freud's psychoanalytic theory is when an individual's desire changes from something that is wrong or intolerable to something that is right and suitable. For example when something does not go right for someone i. e. exam: and the pupil feels angry at the teacher due to them asking hard, difficult questions. The pupil knows that they can't say anything to the teacher and to take their anger out they take it out on someone closer to them i. e. their little brother. This allows individuals not to commit crime and control their feelings and urges and carry out their anger in not a criminal manner.

Freud expresses repression as the procedure to "condemnation". He believes that people have memories, urges, etc but these feelings are hard or unacceptable to think about, individuals tend to take them out their mind and conscious and not think about them. This is what Freud expressed repression as, which is comparable to suppression.

Theories of over control start with the view that crime and criminality are: subjective, meaning there is confliction between them as the definition changes over time. Over control relates to the concern of criminalisation, and why individuals become selected criminals and why individuals react

different to them. Over control is a theory that society can make, adjust or remove rules which have been placed.

The development of a criminal personality can be due to the way a child had been brought up from an early age. This could lead to the child developing a criminal personality when the child becomes older. Freud planned two different models of criminal behaviour. He firstly looked at the types of criminal activity e. g. arson shoplifting etc. he looked at his theory psychosexual development and believed that the disruption of psychic development which may easily be disrupted, leading to neuroses. He believed that people affected at any one or more of these periods in childhood may be the reason for criminal behaviour in later life.

Freud believes that psychosexual development of a child is the inspiration or impact of the parents, the impact of the parents is seen to be unconscious. Freud believed that both parents and child are not conscious of the influence they have on each other, therefore he believed that there is less chance of parents producing children that offend.

Secondly Freud's model of criminal behaviour was the offenders acquire a weak conscious. Freud stated that the progress on the conscious is essentially significant on the upbringing of the child. He sees morals are closely linked to guilt, and those individuals who have an unconscious guilt are the ones who are most liable to be part of criminal behaviour.

Aichhorn (1925) argued that the birth of a child has certain natural desires that want satisfactions. A child is unaware and unaffected by the values of society surrounding the child. The parents therefore should bring the child to

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a social state. If the upbringing of the child is ineffective the child remains asocial. This could lead to actual offending behaviour. He believed that individuals with fully developed conscious but had parents who were criminals themselves. Secondly there were those who had been allowed to do whatever they wanted by weak parents.

I think that psychoanalysis can be used to explain types of serial killing or mental disorders. I feel that individuals who kill people or suffer from a mental illness is due to past experiences they experienced, therapists use psychoanalysis in order to retrieve into the unconscious mind of an individual. They get individuals to talk about what comes into their head and studying the dreams of the individual, the therapist then makes the individual aware of things that are going on in their mind that they are unconscious of.

Theorists believe the unconscious mind is strange. They believe that individuals cannot work out their problems themselves, which leads to other people sorting out their issues.

The criticism of this theory is that people believe that Freud's theory is too simple to explain the density of the human mind; Freud overstated sex and was seen to be sexist. Looking at his theory was a feminist approach, Freud's theories were believed to be essentially from a male viewpoint with his own self-analysis. He hardly integrated female viewpoints into his theories.

Looking at the relationship between Eysenck's personality theory and crime, Eysenck believes by looking at traditional theory there is no therapy of behavioural disorders. Eysenck's theory of criminal behaviour puts together

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biology, social and individual features. Children who are socialised and brought up the right way, makes the child aware of the right and wrong things, they will then keep away from activities that will have consequences. Eysenck believes children control their own impulses.

Eysenck believes individual's behaviour is inner initiative and motivation. Looking at personality and criminal behaviour it is believed that life alone can not justify why individuals turn to crime. Eysenck said that children that are born with criminal features or due to experiences that lead them to be criminals. Criminal doings are seen as inner desired which are not fulfilled (sublimation).

Eysenck's theory has been criticized due to a great amount of doubt and ambiguity regarding the validity and truthfulness of his theory. Farrington (1994) however proposed the approach taken seems to at least identify a discrete connection involving offending and impulsiveness. Though Farrington found no significant connection with personality. Eysenck's study on anti social behavior has not yet been fully tested.

Conclusion

By looking at the work of both criminologists Eysenck and Freud, I feel that the more research should be done on the causes of crime in the future, by looking at the critics of both theorists it has been said that Freud being sexist and the ambiguity of Eysenck's work could not really clarify why individuals behave the way they do. I feel that more research should be put into the work of researchers. Looking at psychodynamic and behavioural learning traditions a criminal mind or personality does exist.

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