1. CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

Different types of crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitive</td>
<td>Taking money or belongings without consent/knowledge of owners</td>
<td>Theft, Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social</td>
<td>Causing harassment or distress to people who are not your family</td>
<td>Drunk &amp; disorderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug-related</td>
<td>Trading or using illegal substances</td>
<td>Supplying or buying drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Making someone else submit to a sexual act against their consent</td>
<td>Rape, Use of child pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Causing physical harm or death to someone else</td>
<td>Physical assault, Murder</td>
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Criminal behaviour as a social construct

Crimes are any acts against the law, but we need to remember that laws differ depending upon the society. This is why crime is seen as a social construct. Crime only exists because people in society have created it through social interaction and laws.

For example: in some societies it is legal to be married to more than one person at a time, but it is illegal in the UK.

Similarly, laws change over time as a society changes. Homosexuality is no longer a crime in the UK, whereas it was 50 years ago.

What is legal and illegal is based upon social norms: behaviours deemed normal and acceptable at that time.

How crime is measured

**Official Statistics:** statistics produced by the Government which are based on the crimes recorded by the police force. They only report crimes which have been detected or reported so they do not show a complete picture of crime but can help to identify trends in crime.

**Self-report Surveys:** questionnaires given to the general public to find out what crimes have been committed against them, regardless of whether they have been officially reported to/recorded by the police

**Offender Survey:** questionnaires given to the general public, or sometimes known offenders, to find out about crimes they have committed.

Nature/Nurture Debate

**Nature:** our behaviour can be attributed to human nature and evolution and, according to some psychologists, our genes. This means that criminal behaviour could be inherited.

**Nurture:** we are born a ‘blank slate’ and our behaviour and personality characteristics are developed through experience and interactions with our environment.

Theory states that criminal and anti-social behaviours are learned: people become criminals depending on their experiences.

We identify with role models who they look up to. We pay attention to what they do and imitate their behaviour. We learn new behaviours by copying theirs.

We are more likely to imitate behaviours we see rewarded (vicarious reinforcement) or receive a reward for (direct reinforcement). We repeat this behaviour and it becomes internalised.

People may be motivated to copy criminal behaviour because they see it being rewarded through money or power. This can lead to internalisation and the establishment of criminality.

However, SLT has been criticised because:

- focuses too much on nurture and ignores the role of nature
- if criminal behaviour is imitated from others, where did it originate from in the first place?
- if SLT is correct then it should be easier to reduce crime. However, many people still continue to commit crime even if they, or experience first hands, the negative consequences.
- attempts to control criminal behaviour, such as through age restrictions on films/video games, have not been successful in stopping the rise of crime.

The Social Learning Theory of Criminality

**Cooper & Mackie: video games and aggression in children**

**Background:**
Was a response to a comment made by Koop who stated that children have become so into games and ‘zapping the enemy’ that when they see another child being abused in real-life they just sit back. Many studies showed that aggression on TV could be responsible for violent behaviour. Cooper and Mackie were interested in whether playing video games, which are much more active than the passive watching of TV, would make a difference to the behaviour which were imitated by children.

- **Aim:** Do violent video games have more effect on violent behaviour than TV?
- **Hypothesis:** playing aggressive video games would have more effect on violent behaviour compared to playing other games.
- **Sample:** 84, 9-11 year olds from New Jersey, USA.
- **Design:** Lab Experiment & Independent Measures
- **Design:**
  - **IV:** type of game played (violent, non-violent, paper & pen maze). Pairs of children allocated to one of the games. One played whilst the other watched, then they swapped over.
  - Condition 1: playing/watching an aggressive video game
  - Condition 2: playing/watching a non-aggressive video game
  - Condition 3: playing/watching paper-and-pen maze games

- **DV:** aggression level displayed by the children after playing the game, which was measured by:
  - observing how long they played with certain types of toys (nerf, basketball, Lego, pinball), or
  - through showing how much they would punish an imaginary child who had been naughty which was measured by how long they pressed a buzzer for.

- At the end of the procedure, children completed a questionnaire on their experience of playing the game they had been allocated.

Findings/Results:

- Participants in the aggressive game condition spent more time playing with the aggressive toys than participants who played one of the other two games. This was truer of girls than boys.

The type of game played had no effect on interpersonal aggression (how much they wanted to punish the naughty child). However, children showed more aggression here when they had played the game rather than watched it.

The questionnaire showed that boys performed better on the violent games than girls, and enjoyed playing it more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maze game</th>
<th>Pac-Man (non-aggressive)</th>
<th>Missile command (aggressive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.88</td>
<td>62.33</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167.63</td>
<td>126.25</td>
<td>111.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98.31</td>
<td>70.50</td>
<td>121.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions:

Playing or watching an aggressive video game had an impact on the aggressive behaviour of girls, who were more likely to choose to play with an aggressive toy afterwards. They suggested that this might be due to a girl experiencing a greater arousal from playing games which they were not usually exposed to. The games did not affect interpersonal aggression as the game itself did not involve any human characters, although the study did some evidence of children’s play imitating the behaviours they observed in the games, supporting SLT.

Evaluation:

- The study ended up investigating two different types of aggression: aggression towards people and aggression towards objects.
- Aggressive behaviour was measured in a narrow way, leading to construct validity.
- Biased sample (age and culture) and so difficult to make generalisations from.
- A number of uncontrolled EVs making it difficult to establish cause and effect.
- Only the immediate effects of aggressive video games were tested.
2. CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

Eysenck's Criminal Personality Theory

This theory states that criminal behaviour is more a product of nature than nurture, saying that some people are born with a personality which makes them more prone to committing crimes. For Eysenck, these personalist traits are fixed, as they are part of our genetic make-up and cannot be changed.

According to Eysenck there are two scales of personality on which people can be measured:

- **Introversion** vs. **Extroversion**
- **Stable** vs. **Neurotic**

**Introversion**: passive and shy

**Extroversion**: out-going, sociable and confident

**Stable**: calm, not easily stressed, in control of emotions

**Neurotic**: anxious, angry and prone to feeling guilt

In later research Eysenck identified a third trait:

- **Psychoticism**: aggressive, impulsive, selfish and not considerate of others

According to Eysenck's theory, individuals with a criminal personality will score highly on Psychoticism, Extroversion and Neuroticism. He stated this was because they tend to be people who need a lot of stimulation from the environment and are often thrill seekers, they get stuck in patterns of behaviour which relieves their anxiety and they don't easily learn from their mistakes.

Eysenck believed that neurotic extroverts are the most difficult personality type to **condition** (acquire learning through consequences). He said that they don't learn easily as children, can be resistant to early socialisation and find it difficult to learn right from wrong. It doesn't mean that children with this personality type will go on to become criminals, but it does mean that parents and other agents of socialisation will have to work harder to divert their child away from the 'thrill of crime'. These children tend to end up in careers where they have to make big decisions and take risks, such as business or politics.

Eysenck argued there was a biological element to criminal behaviour by linking the criminal personality traits to the **central nervous system (CNS)**. He believed that criminality could be linked to under-arousal in the CNS.

The **reticular activation system (RAS)** is the part of the brain stem that links the brain and spinal cord and regulates the stimuli sent to the **cerebral cortex**. Eysenck argued the cerebral cortex in criminals is under-aroused because the stimuli is restricted by the RAS. This leaves it 'hungry' for stimulation which leads to risky, thrill seeking and lawless behaviour.

However, Eysenck has been criticised because:

- It underplays individual differences as he sees criminals as being broadly the same because they share a personality type. This is an over-generalisation.
- The theory is too deterministic by saying personality is genetic and there is little that can be done to control it. Evidence suggests that this isn’t true and that criminals can be rehabilitated suggesting nurture is important.
- The neurotic-extrovert personality links with some crimes better than others. For example, it fits well with murder and rape but less so with fraud and tax evasion.

**Neuropsychology and Personality**

**Background:**

Heaven: delinquency, extroversion, psychoticism and self-esteem

**Hypothesis:** measures of psychoticism, extroversion and self-esteem would be significant predictors for self-reported delinquency

**Sample:** 282, 13-15 year olds from two Catholic schools in Australia, Modal age at time 1 was 14, and at time 2 was 16.

**Design:** Longitudinal study using data gathered through self-report questionnaires and analysed through correlations: Measures of psychoticism, extroversion and self-esteem were correlated with measures of self-reported delinquency

**Conclusion:** Overall the findings did not show significant support for the hypothesis, although the results did show a positive correlation between psychoticism and delinquency at time 1 and time 2, and a weak correlation with extraversion and delinquency at time 2.

**Results:** Results of the self-reported delinquency questionnaire showed that males were more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour than females, at both time 1 (21.16 v 18.71) and time 2 (20.96 v 19.58)

**Evaluation:** The sample was culturally biased and the participants may have given socially desirable answers to the questions asked. The use of closed questionnaires may have led to low construct validity as personality and delinquency are too complex to reduce to scores. Finally, it is not possible to establish cause and effect through correlational research.

**Application: The Changing Nature of Punishment**

**Restorative Justice: Aims to get offenders to behave more pro-socially than anti-socially through meeting the victim of their crime in person and allowing them to ‘face up’ to the consequences of their actions. Justice is often restored by the offender ‘paying’ for their crime, either through an apology, compensation or community service to fix what they damaged.**

**Positive role models:** Uses the principles of SLT to help criminals learn pro-social behaviour from good role models, such as professional trainers who lead social skills training sessions, or mentors who are matched with offenders so that they are likely to identify with them, such as reformed criminals.

**Effects of punishment and deterrents:**

- **Prisons:** punish by taking freedom, and other privileges, away from offenders by confining them to an institution.
- **Community sentences:** punish offenders by making them give up their time to do unpaid work for the community, such as litter picking or painting community areas.
- **Fines:** punish offenders by making them pay, financially, for their offence. The negative consequence of their behaviour is losing earnings or savings.