

Is Criminology A Science? If Yes, Then How Is It Related To It And What Are Its Theories

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Abstract:

criminology is considered a social science that studies the causes, consequences and prevention of criminal behavior, while it is not a physical science or natural science the research paper analysis it all.

Keywords: psychological theory, sociology, criminal behavior, penology, victimology, forensic science, human personalities, association theory and etc.

INTRODUCTION

Is criminology a science? First of all, what does the word science means and what does it means to you? Science can be defined as a branch of study or knowledge about the physical, biological or chemical universe is called science, whereas criminology can be defined as the scientific study of crime, criminals and punishment is called criminology.

So how is it related to criminology?

My answer to you is yes, criminology is related to science and social science, this research paper will give you a thorough knowledge about criminology,

CONTENTS

- **how is it related to science,**
- **related to social science**
- **how criminology plays an important role in study of psychology by- Sigmund Freud psychodynamic theory Relevant examples**
- **Is it also related to forensic science?**
- **what are its contributions in the field of science,**
- **Theories of criminology**
- **The theories contribution in modern world.**
- **Theorists and their theories about criminals**
- **And why the theories got criticized.**
- **Relevant cases**
- **Examples**

Criminology is considered a social science, as mentioned above it is the study of crime, criminal behavior, the criminal justice system, in utilizing research and empirical methods to understand and also to analyze these phenomena.

Considering, it shares characteristics with natural science, for example like the use of data and systematic methods as it primarily focuses on human behavior in a social context.

Criminology in field of science, encompasses various subfields and approaches such as,

1. Research and theories

Criminologists had developed theories to explain criminal behavior and conduct research so that the theories can be tested which also involves collecting and analyzing data which are related to crime and criminal behavior.

2. Profiling of criminal

Profiling involves generating or creating profiles of potential criminals or offenders on the basis of their behavioral patterns, their psychological characteristics and other factors which are often used in law enforcement.

3. Victimology

Victimology can be defined as the study of victims of crime, their experiences and how should the government and society shall support and protect them is another essential aspect of criminology.

4. Forensic science

Forensic science combines elements of criminology and its various scientific disciplines to investigate and to solve crimes.

5. Penology

Penology can be defined as the study of punishment, prisons, and it also focuses on rehabilitation and reforming or criminals and also the topic of recidivism

In a brief, criminology is a multifaceted field that employs scientific methods so that the world can understand, explain, and address criminal behavior and its societal impact, it draws from various disciplines, which makes it a unique branch of social science.

HOW CRIMINOLOGY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PSYCHOLOGY;

Criminology and psychology are mainly closely related fields like in understanding criminals and their criminal behaviors as psychology provides insights into the psychological factor that contributes to criminal behavior.

Psychologists' studies aspects including personality, motivation and cognitive processes which can be relevant in understanding why individuals commit crime.

This can be easily understood by psychodynamic theory by Sigmund Freud.

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY BY SIGMUND FREUD

This theory by Sigmund Freud focuses on the role of unconscious mind and also the various psychological forces for shaping human behavior.

Sigmund Freud proposed that all individuals mind is divided into three parts,

- the conscious mind (which are the thoughts and feelings that you are aware of),
- the preconscious mind (which are the thoughts and feelings that can be brought into consciousness)
- and the unconscious mind (which are the thoughts and feelings hidden from conscious awareness).



Id:
Instincts



Ego:
Reality



Superego:
Morality

The picture above states the structure of personality which is divided into three parts; id, ego and superego.

- **ID**

The id (instinct desire) represents as the most primitive parts of the human personality and is also related to the conscious mind.

The id can be impulsive and is mainly focused on fulfilling basic needs such as hunger, pleasure etc.

Id mainly relies on the principle of pleasure and also demands instant gratification regardless of any circumstances

Id is selfish and wishful in nature. It comprises of biological instincts or desires which includes sex life and the aggressiveness instinct.

For example;

A new born baby (or infant) crying when hungry, as still the infant is not aware of the time, place or surroundings and how the infant can cause inconvenience to others present.

Now comes, **ego-**

The ego in human personality acts as a kind of umpire or referee between the id and superego which aims to find a balance that allows both the fulfillment of need and also the needs which are in accordance to societal norms and values.

The ego operates in the principle of reality which finds the ways which can be accepted socially and are realistic to fulfill the desires of id.

It plays the role of a mediator between the impulsive demands of id and values of superego.

For example; when a person feels hungry (which can be driven by id) regardless of an inappropriate circumstance but waits for an appropriate time to eat.

And last, **superego-**

The superego is the third component of the human mind along with the id and ego, as it comprises of ethical standards and values of society these are mainly learned from childhood from parents and other people with, they grew up.

Superego also tells us when to cross the line and when we have crossed the line.

The superego has a role to uphold social and cultural norms so that it can guide the individuals for behaving in ways that are acceptable socially and is morally seen.

The superego generates the feelings which include anxiety, guilt, fear or pride based on the persons action or sign.

For example;

A person feels a sense of guilt and shame after performing an action which is not accepted socially and is against the ethical and moral values even if the id and ego were shoving for a different course like, a person tempted to steal for fulfilling his basic needs but refrains from doing so due to his strong moral code from this it can be known that superego is at work.

In conclusion, Sigmund Freud's theory introduced significant concepts that have a lasting impact on the field of psychology, the three components of personality id, ego and superego represent the essential components of a human mind and each serving their roles in decision making and how they are shaping human behavior.

While Freud's ideas have been influential in psychology and will be continued to be debated so they have also faced criticism and have evolved over time apart from this the theory has contributed in understanding of human behavior and the mind.

Is it also related to forensic science?

Let me answer this question for you, in my opinion yes, criminology and forensic science are related fields but they also focus on different aspects of the criminal and their criminal behavior.

Forensic science is a science which is often engaged in solving crime at molecular level whereas criminology is a more complex and theoretical practice, seeking to understand why the criminals commit crime and consequences of criminal activity.

Forensic science is essentially a crime laboratory-based profession, it is used around the world so that to protect health of public, to enforce criminal laws, regulations and to resolve civil disputes.

Many people opt for both the field like forensic criminology, as a forensic criminologist it mainly delves on understanding the criminal mind and what is the science of crime.

As forensic criminology encompasses of two disciplines which are criminology and forensic science, as above mentioned on page 2 and 3 criminology is defined as the study of crimes, criminals and punishment whereas the forensic science is the study of the evidence which are discovered at the crime scenes includes analysis and collection of physical evidence such as fingerprints, DNA, and much more which can be helpful in criminal investigations and legal proceedings.

Criminologists seek to prevent crime by understanding the criminal behavior of criminals.

As forensic science utilizes scientific disciplines which are in relation to specific questions of law.

While in both the fields there are distinct disciplines which often intersect, with criminologists and forensic scientist who work together to understand and to address the criminal behavior and to use scientific evidence in court proceedings.

What are its contributions in the field of science-

As, we have already discussed above that how criminology plays a major role in the field of science whether it is psychology, forensic science, social science.

We have already discussed how psychodynamic theory by Sigmund Freud played an important role in the field of psychology in understanding the personality of a human being.

Criminology is an interdisciplinary field which is drawing from psychology, sociology, economics and other social sciences for contributing to a broader understanding of a societal issues.

In a brief, criminology is a valuable scientific discipline that contributes for the understanding of crime, human behavior and the development which are based in evidence- based policies and practices in the field of criminals.

- Theories and schools of criminology

There are various theories of criminology which seeks to explain why people engage in criminal activities some of the major theories are-

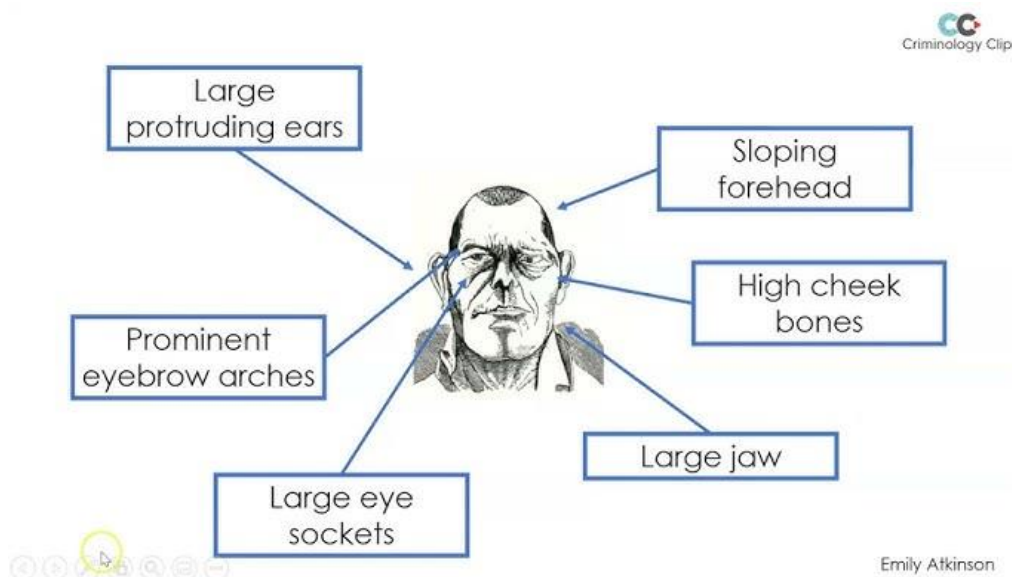
1. Positive school of criminology

The positive school of criminology is also called Italian school of criminology. It was introduced by Cesare Lombroso

According to Cesare Lombroso, he said that the person who commits crime or engage in any activity that is punishable by law and is against the law is a criminal, and the person who commits crime is a born criminal.

Lombroso in his theory distinguished between different types of criminals which mainly include the criminaloid and born criminal.

Criminals have similar biological features such as facial feature, which includes high cheekbones, large canine teeth, and ¹large jaws etc. whereas criminaloids on other hand, did not have the biological characteristics of a born criminal but they become criminal during their lives due to many factors such as environmental factor.



Later on, the theory given by Lombroso was challenged by

Enrico Ferri (1856-1928)

Enrico Ferri challenged the theory of atavism and said that mere biological factors were not enough for someone to become criminal

According to Enrico Ferri, there is a gap between the society and the individual.

And criminal should be a product of many factors like he classified –

- Born criminals
- Occasional criminals
- Insane criminals

¹ www.crimonologyclips.com

- Habitual criminals

According to Enrico Ferri, born criminals are those criminals who are by birth criminals and have distinctive criminal biological features.

Occasional criminals, are those criminals when any person sees any of his/or her family member or any family relative it can be anyone like sister, wife with a stranger in any objectionable or not appropriate situation so due to emotional shock, the person commits crime and it is called occasional criminal.

Insane criminals, are those criminals where at the time of performing such act he//or she is incapable of understanding what is right or wrong and is unable to act rationally or in good faith is called insane criminals.

Habitual criminals, are those criminals who had committed an offence previously and is likely to commit again and is presumed to be a danger to society, these type of criminals are also called repeat offender.

Pre classical school

the pre classical school of criminology mainly refers to the theories and ideas about crime and punishment that existed prior to the development of classical school.

The theory and school were founded by Jeremy Bentham, this school is also called as demonological school.

This school mainly existed in the ancient times likely to be in 17 or 18th century as there were different codes of law and punishment that time.

We can say the concept was mainly based on 'eye for an eye'. There was not a existence of scientific explanations.

This school mainly believed upon the idea that there exists a world that is full of evil spirits and evil powers as every individual is controlled by these powers of that world, if the individuals are influenced by these power then the person is likely to lose their sense of what is right or wrong and then they commits crime.

This school comprises of methods and treatments like extreme torture were uses to extract confessions and to determine guilt or innocence of a person as these practices were used to reveal the truth.

The school was criticized later on the basis of the punishment.

Classical school

This school came after the pre classical school in the 18th century. The classical school was supported by Cesare Beccaria.

This school rejected the theory of pre classical school and said that there are no evil spirits.

This school was based upon the idea that the individuals commit crime out of their own will and passion. It believed that more heinous the crime then same heinous the punishment for example punishment should be proportional to the intensity of crime.

This school focused on crime. The school was later criticized because it ignored the first offender and habitual offender.

Neo-classical school

The neo classical school was developed after the classical school of criminology as it is also known as the better version of the classical school.

The neo classical school was supported by professor Gillin.

According to neo classical school, the punishment should be given according to the offence he committed which means the mental capacity of the offender.

It mainly focused on explaining and understanding the facts of the case and what is the mental state of the offender. The school divided criminals into many categories like habitual offender, insane offender, first offender etc.

Differential association theory;

The theory of differential association is considered as one of the most important theories in criminology, this theory was propounded by E.H Sutherland in early 20th century.

According to E.H Sutherland, there are two types of organization,

- Organization for criminal purposes
- Organization against criminal purposes

According to him, the conflict of culture is a fundamental principle in exploitation of crime.

To explain the theory of differential association, Sutherland gave various points;

- According to this theory, individuals learn how to commit crime. Criminal behavior is learnt.
- Criminal behavior is learnt with interaction with others as a process of communication.
- The theory provides the importance of interacting with other individuals who already have criminal tendencies or who endorse values of criminals, the interaction can occur anywhere with friends, families, peer groups or communities.
- The principle part of learning of criminal behavior takes place in intimate personal groups.
- The learning mainly includes techniques of committing a crime and specific direction of motives, drives attitudes and rationalization.
- Attitudes, values, and motivations for criminal behavior through association with other is learnt. the criminal behavior is not innate but is acquired through social interactions.
- The theory suggests that the person becomes delinquent or deviant on the basis of definitions which are favoring conformity or deviance which they encounter in their social interactions.
- The theory of differential association may vary in frequency, which means how often the individual interacts with criminal influencers, duration, intensity and priority these also include the age they first encountered criminal interactions at first.

For example-

Street gangs are the perfect example as we have all seen in movies whether it is Bollywood or Hollywood of how often an individual can learn criminal behavior with their peers. Members of a gang can learn how their peers are engaging in committing various crimes such as, robbery, murder, drug trafficking or vandalism etc.

Strain theory

Another important theory of criminology is strain theory it is a concept developed by Robert k Merton.

The strain theory suggests that individuals may turn to deviant behavior when they experience a disconnection between their cultural goals and the means which are available to achieve these goals.

In simple way, there is a gap between the individual goals and the way of achieving them.

The strain and disconnection can lead the individuals to a feeling of frustration and can easily shove people toward criminal behavior so that they can easily attain those goals.

The strain theory is often used to explain why the individuals of a society may resort to crime or deviance behavior when they perceive limited opportunities for success through legitimate means.

Anomie theory

The anomie theory is also one of the most important theory of criminology related to the social disorganization theory, the anomie theory was introduced by French sociologist Emile Durkheim in 1893. He provided in his theory the concept of normlessness which means a state where the individuals behavior and his expectations are unclear or cannot be described where the system has broken down.

Emile Durkheim in his theory claimed that this normlessness is the main reason that causes deviant behavior in individuals and which resulted mainly in suicide, depression.

The word anomie means lack of normal ethical and social standards.

The theory helps us to understand and provides insights into the relationship between individuals societal values, opportunities and deviant behavior.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion of this research paper, we understood how criminology is a multifaceted field that seeks to understand the causes of crime and what are its consequences as well as how to prevent and control criminal behavior. We get to know about how criminology is an important part of science or whether it is social science, how criminological theories provided a better aspect on describing the human personality by introducing psychodynamic theory and understanding it with the field of psychology. It encompasses a wide range of theories and methodologies from biological, environmental and sociological influences. Criminologist strive to develop a deeper understanding of criminal behavior so that the impact of society can be understood and by understanding it there will always be a ultimate goal for reducing crime rates so that world can be promoted to a safer place. The numerous theories by our criminologists made a huge impact on our society so that the people can learn about criminals, how they become criminals or are they born criminals? Whether the criminal behavior is learnt through others or not, as research and innovation in criminology will continue to play a vital role which will help in shaping policies and practices within the world. I hope this research provides you a better aspect about criminology.