

Anxiety, Attachment and Guilt: Predicting Criminal Behavior in Female Students in Sindh

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Abstract

Antisocial or criminal tendencies have been identified in female students through Psychopathy Checklist-Revised and in order to find anxiety, attachment and guilt; concerned scales have been used. According to the study results, anxiety and guilt have been measured as high, where as attachment with parents and peers is also high, which is positive sign in female students in Sindh, Pakistan.

Keywords

Criminal behavior, anxiety, attachment, guilt, psychopathy, female students

Introduction

The understanding of the crime and criminal behavior and how that understanding can be beneficial for the society is the goal of criminology. Criminologists try to find a variety of risk factors that stand to be causes of criminal behavior and discover correlations associated with the phenomenon of the interest.

Present study sees the criminal behavior in the context of psychoanalysis and investigates anxiety, attachment and guilt correlating with psychopathy in female students. Studying criminal behavior with correlation will help criminologists to predict and find solutions to prevent the same. (Bartol,1986). Psychoanalytic Criminology refers to the Freudian Psychoanalysis and studies the crime and criminal behavior investigating into personality and psyche. To study the development and growth of the early life events as consequential to later life is important for the psychoanalysis (Viney, 1993). Certain experiences are stored in the unconsciousness, when they find linking stimuli, manifest in different forms of the behavior: criminal or non-criminal. Social scientists have found multiple causative factors molding the behavior as criminal.

Walklate (2005) expresses about the argument of Wilson and Herrnstein about criminal behavior as being contributed by three factors: first an individual's biological make up, second the social and psychological reinforces and third conscience (the guilt feelings related to criminal behavior); and further, she explains the causative factors for criminal behavior as presence of mental disorder, a particular type of personality, suffering of physical or mental trauma in childhood, loss of job in later life, break up of a relationship and other stressful situations.

Anxiety creates from perceived and real threats to the well-being of the human. Neurotic anxiety, Freud seems more concerned, aims at studying the irrational forces that provide threat to the ego of human. The children, whose parents threaten their child's security through their isolation, rejection, indifference and hostility, develop the real self "central inner force common to all human and yet unique in each, which is a deep source of growth" (Horney, 1950), and become vulnerable to anxiety.

The source of neurotic anxiety is within personality and there seems no escape and no clear identification. Objective anxiety arises when ego is thwarted by perceived objective forces and power in the environment (Viney, p. 371).

Anxiety and mood disorders are found linked together and increased levels of anxiety are associated with increased levels of psychopathy or criminal behavior (Lovelace and Gannon, 1999).

Social scientists have studied the causes of delinquency and found changes in it relating to parent-adolescent attachment, they (Liska and Reed, 1985) analyzed that friendly attachment/interaction between them reduces the chances of delinquency and makes stronger the school attachment and family ties.

When analyzing the risk factors like child abuse, neglect and rejection both by parents to children, the rejection was measured as having greater influence and children became vulnerable to mental illness, early death and criminal behavior; and if parents were aggressive and alcoholic, the serious criminal behavior was reported in those children. (McCord, 1983).

Tennisha Riley in her study "Is it Just a Guy Thing?: The Development of Conduct Disorder in Girls", (2008) explored that familial variables like parental stability, home environment and parental mental health, and abuse affect the behavior of female children, which bring negative impact upon them and in the result conduct disorder is created leading to criminal behavior.

Current psychoanalytic theory focuses on the shame and guilt. Guilt is altruism and painful affect resulting from the feelings of that some one has hurt others. Psychoanalytic theory maintains that guilt and shame like emotions provide attachment especially for the children to the parents, peers and others in social environment (Weiss, 1986 & Zahn et al, 1990).

When a child fails to attach herself/himself to parents, the egocentricism produces the trauma and emotional feelings of a child get threatened and in the result guilt is produced. Such maladaptive guilt in later life produces depression and other forms of psychopathology. (Weiss, 1993; Shilkert & Shilkert, 1993). Depression and substance abuse continuously let not one control the unconscious guilt. (Fretter, 1995). High level of maladaptive guilt was found in recidivating female prisoners, whose pathogenic beliefs were that they deserved abuse, neglect and punishment

because they were bad (Sweezy 1997). Lack of empathy, absence of guilt and use of others' ideas or work refer to the callous unemotional traits which manifest when the conduct disorder is getting developed and if this disorder persists, the girls will be more vulnerable to criminal behavior till adulthood (Frick et al, 2003). Lack of empathy/remorse, guilt, conduct disorder, not knowing what is right or wrong and manipulative behavior all are the characteristics of psychopathic personality. The super ego in normal population (social) unlike psychopath population, works as a force binding it to the social norms, ideals and standards of the society (Viney, p. 374).

Hare (1996) defines psychopathy as “a socially devastating disorder defined by a constellation of affective, interpersonal, and behavioral characteristics, including egocentricity; impulsivity; irresponsibility; shallow emotions; lack of empathy, guilt, or remorse; pathological lying, manipulateness; and the persistent violation of social norms and expectations.”

In a study, callousness/lack of empathy and remorse were found as important features of female population than male (Jackson et al., 2002), but another study found those psychopathic measures higher than females, where as promiscuous sexual behavior was higher in females. (Grann, 2000)

Anxiety, negative affectivity and intelligence were found higher to the greater level in female psychopaths as compared to males. (Vitale et al., 2002).

Blackburn & Maybury (1985) describes the criteria for the “Checkley Psychopath” characterized as having superficial charm, intelligence, deceitfulness and devoidness of warmth and empathy features.

Studies have investigated the psychological traits in females predisposing them to the possibility of criminal behavior.

A study conducted on stress and psychiatric disorder in urban areas of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, found that women (25%) and men (10%) suffer from anxiety and depressive disorder and levels of emotional distress increases with the increasing years of age in both sexes. More, distress level was found reportedly high in women living in joint family and younger women displayed lower levels of mental disorder with the higher levels of education. (Mumford, et al., 2000). Agha et al. (2008) concludes in a study that disturbed behavior especially addictive, in younger people finds its risk factors in psychologically disturbed family.

Socio-demographic Profile of Female Students

Table I: Age Group of Female Students: 19-23 (average 21 years)

Parent's Qualification		
Father		
	No Education (0 years)	0 %
	Primary (8 years)	2%
	Matriculation (10 years)	3%
	Intermediate (12 years)	7%
	Graduation (14 years)	56%
	Masters (16 years)	32%
Mother		
	No Education (0 years)	8%
	Primary (8 years)	26%
	Matriculation (10 years)	24%
	Intermediate (12 years)	18%
	Graduation (14 years)	18%
	Masters (16 years)	6%

Methods

To measure the social anxiety in female students, The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998), this is more often used; is used here in this study. Construct validity and excellent reliability have been shown by many empirical studies (Heimberg & Turk, 2002). This scale was used by Carol, et al. (2006) to measure social anxiety in the students enrolled in introductory classes to psychology at Temple University and clients.

The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale is used in this study relating to measuring social anxiety among the female students, because their interaction with new students, teachers, and new place put them in new dilemma of socialization and adaptation. For the attachment, Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and for the Guilt, Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (IGQ, O'Connor, et al., 1997), have been used here in this study. Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire, and Psychopathy Checklist-Revised were used to collect data from the female students of the University of Sindh, Jamashoro, Sindh, Pakistan. The total population was 5126; where as the sample size 382 (7.45%) was randomly selected.

Procedure

The reversed value Likert scale is used for every component: anxiety, attachment, guilt and psychopathy; in which summative value i.e. means of the mean scores of all the responses i.e., strongly agree-agree and strongly disagree and disagree are calculated and compared.

Results and Discussions

Table II: Anxiety, Attachment, Guilt and Psychopathy in Female Students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Anxiety*	32.03	108.65	76.50	17.68
	Agree 70.34		Disagree 47.09	
Attachment**	104.36	89.01	49.39	19.55
	Agree 96.68		Disagree 34.47	
Guilt***	78.53	103.27	57.33	17.28
	Agree 90.90		Disagree 37.30	
Psychopathic Personality****	42.29	104.45	124.87	16.56
	Agree 74.87		Disagree 70.71	
Antisocial Lifestyle****	234.55	248.17	69.11	24.08
	241.36		Disagree 46.6	

*Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS)

**Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)

****Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (IGQ)

**** Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R): two factor

The average age of the female students was 21 years. The table1 shows the education level of the parents, the fathers' highest level of education of graduation (14 years) was 65% and mothers' highest level of education 26% was primary (8 years). Female students belong to the villages, cities and one town, excluding the town Karachi.

Mattick and Clarke (1998) explain that Social interaction anxiety scale intends to measure the anxiety regarding the social interactions in groups and dyads.

Table 2 reveals that majority of the female students have experienced the higher level of anxiety in their age 21, which seems corresponding to the study (Ahmed et al. 2007), that found the increased level of the generalized anxiety, mixed anxiety, social phobia and depression in females of age group 15 to 25. Ana Freud

using the Sigmund Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* approach describes that the Defense mechanism of ego against the external aggressive objectives, creates anxiety (Claudine & Pierre Geissmann, 1998, p.89).

'Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment' aims to explain the attachment with parents and peers and self concept of as being member of the family, and negatively correlated to loneliness. Adolescents when feel secure attachment with mother and father report less conflict and less loneliness vice versa; they (adolescents) show symptoms of psychiatric problems and are prone to delinquency (Armsden, 1991, Burke 1991).

Positive quality role of infant-caregiver attachment plays important role for the social development of the child and disturbed parental relation towards children infuse all personality disorders in the children (Bolwlby, 1999, and Krueger, 1994).

Table 2 shows that females of average age 21, have agreed to have higher level of attachment with parents and peers and they find their parents and peers as responsible and supervising for their activities. Their interaction in family is positive with parents and they find themselves closely associated with their parents and peers. On that account, it is positive point found in the female students in this study. So it is deduced that there is inverse correlation between attachment and psychopathy. But if there was weak attachment with parents and peers, it could be predicted that psychopathy or criminal behavior might follow resultantly. Above table shows the guilt as higher agreed upon by the females.

In the psychoanalytic context, pathogenic beliefs cause to inculcate guilt and in the result psychopathological symptoms are developed in female adolescents (Weiss 1986). Separation guilt in psychoanalytic perspective is "the belief that one does not have a right to life," (Model 1965) or is characterized as feelings arising from separating from one's parents and/or being disloyal to one's loved ones or differing from others' ideas (Bush, 1989).

Freud (1896) describes that survivor guilt stems from the irrational belief that any thing for ones good will be on the cost of others loss. Guilt is created when one receives success in competition by defeating other. But this kind guilt is absent in psychopathic personality, his super ego does not let one learn from his guilt feelings, he lacks guilt and remorse. Most of the theories of describing the characteristics of psychopathy owe their intellect literature to Freud. Psychopaths are characterized as egocentric, impulsive, guiltless, an empathic to others and lack in learning from the others ideas or work. Psychopathy Checklist Revised (two factors) describes characteristics as callous, remorseless for psychopathic personality and socially deviant or antisocial for the antisocial lifestyle. Freud has not directly discussed about the crime or criminal behavior but explains that group standards are

internalized through the formation of super ego in childhood and reality oriented ego regulates the positive values of the behavior (Nass, 1966).

Using PCL-R among the sample of 103 in detained female offenders in a local jail, Salekin et al. (1997) found that 16% females were above the score of psychopathic personality, where as 33% score was found in females showing the antisocial lifestyle.

Levels of Psychopathic personality and antisocial lifestyle indicate psychopathy, psychopathic personality is little bit above the 50 %, while antisocial lifestyle is to the considerable level high according to above table, and has revealed correlated with high anxiety, high guilt; where as high attachment has not been found as direct proportionate to psychopathy.

Primary psychopaths' disruptive behavior has been diagnosed by Robert Hare and his colleagues that, it is not resulting from the presence of neurotic or psychotic illness (Wright & Miller, 2005).

“Antisocial behavior results from dynamic disturbance, and who [are] more properly classified with neurosis or psychosis,” (McCord and McCord, 1983) and “asocial, aggressive, highly impulsive persons who feel little or no guilt, and are unable to form lasting bond of affection with other human beings,” (Blackburn, 1993), are categorized as secondary psychopaths.

Psychopathy Checklist Revised is a diagnostic tool used by many social and natural scientists to identify the antisocial or criminal behavior tendencies in a person. It was originally used to assess the psychopathic or criminal tendencies in the accused persons, with the intent to diagnose the recidivating tendencies. In recent studies, this scale has been effectively used for both sexes: male and female adolescents in normal population.

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