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DIFFERENCES IN INTELLIGENCE, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-CONCEPT BETWEEN CRIMINALS AND NON-CRIMINALS

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Abstract

This paper describes how the researcher examined differences between criminals and non-criminals in emotional intelligence, intelligence, and self-concept. Firstly, criminals were compared with non-criminals in intelligence test scores obtained by using Raven's Progressive Matrices. Next, this study examined differences in emotional intelligence between criminals and non-criminals by using Emotional Intelligence Inventory. Besides, Self-Concept of criminals derived by using the Self-Concept Scale was also compared with those of non-criminals. Participants of the present study consist of two groups. These are a criminal group and its comparison contrast group. The criminal group contains 185 criminals incarcerated in the Central prison of Upper Myanmar, Mandalay Region for their committing any crime of murder or robbery or rape or theft. The comparison contrast was recruited from normal population and contains 185 individuals who have never committed any crime. The criminals have lower intelligence test scores than their counterparts, according to the results. In comparison with non-criminals, the result shows, the criminals in the present sample have more incidence of a well-developed concept of negative self-image as bad, not likable, undesirable, unsentimental, worthless individual, individual with attachment to nobody and no future than their counterparts. However, there was not much difference in self-awareness and empathy between the criminal group and non-criminal group. Moreover, the finding of present study isolated the self-regulation component from such other Emotional Intelligence components as self-awareness and empathy, and because it was found that there was significant difference in self-regulation between the criminal group and the non-criminal group. It was unexpectedly found that the self-motivation scale scores of the criminal group were higher than those of non-criminal group.

Key Words : Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Concept, Crime

Introduction

The present paper is an attempt to describe a comparative study of criminals with non-criminals in psychosocial factors. In particular, this paper is concerned with how the researcher compared criminals with non-criminal in emotional intelligence, intelligence, and self concept.

The Preliminary Consideration of the Study Object in the Present Research

Some theorists predict that there is a direct connection between poor emotional skills and the rising crime rate (John Chancellor, 2012). Children who have poor emotional skills become social outcast at a very young age. They might be the class bully because of a hot temper. They learned to react with their fist rather than reason. Poor social and emotional skills contribute to poor attention in class and feelings of frustration. They rapidly fall behind and make friends with others in the

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same boat. They divert to a direct path to crime that starts early in life. While there is no doubt that family and environment are great contributors, the common thread is poor emotional and social skills.

Goleman (1995) says that there is a correlation between lack of emotional intelligence and crime. Three things were found to make a person more likely to commit a crime: impulsivity, poor anger control and lack of empathy. If a person has all three, he or she has a dangerous recipe for a human being (Brown, 1996).

Emotional intelligence is the ability or tendency to perceive, understand, regulate and harness emotions adaptively in the self and in others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Schutte et al., 1998). Some conceptualizations of emotional intelligence are rather broad and include a range of adaptive characteristics associated with emotions (e.g., the ability to effectively communicate emotions; Goleman, 1995), whereas other conceptualizations of emotional intelligence (e.g., Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000) emphasize the cognitive elements, such as emotions aiding judgment and memory. Furthermore, researchers have conceptualized emotional intelligence both as an ability and as a trait (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2000; Schutte & Malouff, 1998).

There are several theories of emotional intelligence. Gardner's (1993) *the multiple theory of intelligence* encompasses intrapersonal intelligence, including knowledge of one's own emotions and thoughts. Averill and Nunley's (1992) emotional creativity theory focuses on the value of emotional competences through creativity. Saarni's (1999) posit the related construct of emotional competence is a crucial component of social development and contributes to the quality of interpersonal relationships.

However, researchers have not empirically examined the connections between poor emotional intelligence skills and rising crime rate. Emotional intelligence, theoretically, includes five types of skills: self-awareness, managing emotions, self-motivation, empathy and social skill. Specifically, the present study investigated whether lack of which skills in emotional intelligence may be related to the rising crime.

Crime is a very broad subject. There are many types of crime, and they can be divided into many categories of which the following categories most useful: traditional crime, organized crime, white collar-crime, and political crime (Haskell and Yablonsky, 1974). Among them, traditional crime (or we can call it "street crime") is the type traditionally recognized by all societies as crime. Included categories are such crimes as murder, rape, and theft, so forth. In this study, the cases of traditional crime were be especially investigated.

People who are intellectually super-normal are sometimes apt to become and frustrated on the level of the common normal life, and then they sometimes apply their super mental power to criminality. In these cases, the crime generally is well planned and the crime techniques so refined and perfected that many are never discovered or brought to account. However, investigation has proved that about 60 percents of persons who commit crimes have a reasonably low intelligence and have failed a year of school once or more (Shulman, 1951). This type of person has difficulty in obtaining work, and to stay employed. This results in unemployment and in order to obtain money he commits a crime. The crime pattern is usually characterized by clumsiness without refined planning. This type of criminal is caught more easily than the more intelligent criminal. In order to examine this fact, the present study investigated the relationship between intelligence and criminality.

The self-concept has been identified as a very important aspect in human life. A person must be able to have respect for himself and to be "his own best friend". This is how a person sees himself. If a person believes that he is worthless, and the society does not care what happen to him, this attitude (self-perception) may well lead to crime (Reckless, Dinitz, and Murray, 1956). That is why this study examines the differences in positive self-image between the criminals and non criminals.

The Trend of the Present Study

The present study intends to compare psychosocial factors of criminals with those of non-criminals. Firstly, intelligence of criminals are compared with non-criminals' intelligence using Raven's Progressive Matrices. Next, this study examines emotional intelligence between criminals and non-criminals. Besides, self-concepts of criminals are compared with those of non-criminals. In order to fulfill this purpose, the following six hypotheses were considered.

Hypothesis 1: The Intelligence Test scores of the non-criminal group will be higher than those of the criminal group.

Hypothesis 2: The non-criminal group will have more positive self-image than the criminal group.

Hypothesis 3: The Self-Awareness Scale scores of the non-criminal group will be higher than those of the criminal group.

Hypothesis 4: Self-Regulation Scale scores of the non-criminal group will be higher than those of the criminal group.

Hypothesis 5: The Empathy Scale scores of the non-criminal group will be higher than those of the criminal group.

According to Sutherland (1939), manual scale is important in some of the rackets, but the most important thing in all the racket is the ability to manipulate people. For example, a thief or a leader of robbers depends on his approach, front wits, and in many instances his talking ability. Thus, criminals seem to have good social skill. On the other hands, many mobsters seem to be individuals with burning ambition to succeed so that they could commit any crime. Given these assumptions, the present study hypothesized as follow;

Hypothesis 6: There are no differences in social skill and self-motivation skill between the non-criminal group and the criminal group.

Method

Participants

Participants of the present study consist of two groups. These are a criminal group and its comparison contrast group.

The criminal group contains 185 criminals incarcerated in the Central Prison of Upper Myanmar, Mandalay Region for their committing any crime of murder or robbery or rape or theft. Their mean age was 32.8. This group was made up of 22 females and 163 males.

The comparison contrast group was recruited from normal population and contains 185 individuals who have never committed any crime.

Measures

The present study used a set of questionnaires containing educational background, family background, socio-economical status, occupational background, types & frequency of crime they committed, the Raven's Progressive Matrices, the EI Inventory and Self-Concept Scale.

The Emotional Intelligence Inventory

The Emotional Intelligence Inventory consists of 5 subscales: The Self-Awareness Scale; The Self-Regulation Scale; The Self-Motivation Scale; The Empathy Scale; The Social Skill Scale.

The Self-Awareness Scale consists of 19 items. Each item has a 4-point scale from not at all (1), a little bit (2), a moderate amount (3), to a great deal (4) as responses, they rated their self-awareness over themselves. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale is .76.

The Self-Regulation Scale is made up of 17 items and a force-choice technique scale. The respondent must choose the most frequent one of three answers. For example: When you argue with people you happen to: (choose the most frequent one) (a) Raise your voice; (b) Get angry and shout; (c) Lower your voice. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale is .63.

The Self-Motivation Scale consists of 20 items measure on 4-point scale from not at all (1), a little bit (2), a moderate amount (3), to a great deal (4). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale is .80.

The Empathy Scale also consists of 20 items rated on 4-point scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4). The internal consistency reliability coefficient is .86.

The Social Skill Scale is made up of 19 items rated on 4-point scale format with not at all (1), a little bit (2), a moderate amount (3), and a great deal (4). The Cronbach's alpha is .80.

The Self-Concept Scale

The Self-Concept Scale is made up of 11 items rated on 4-point response scale. The Cronbach' alpha of the scale is .79.

The Raven's Progressive Matrices

The Progressive Matrices, developed in Great Britain by Raven (1938), were designed as a measurement of Spearman's g factor. It consists of 60 matrices, or designs with a part missing. Those taking the test are expected to select the correct part to complete the designs from six or eight given alternatives. The items are grouped into five series (A to E), each containing 12 matrices of increasing difficulty but similar in principle All items are presented in black ink on a white background. The earlier series require accuracy of discrimination; the later, more difficult series involve analogies, permutation and alteration of pattern, and other logical relations. Retest reliability in groups of older children and adults that were moderately homogeneous in age varies approximately between .70 and .90.

Procedure

In order to conduct a comparative study between the criminals and non-criminals in intelligence, emotional intelligence, and self-concept, the permission was taken from the Prison Director and Chief Warden of Central Prison, Prison Department, Mandalay Region to recruit criminals for this study. With the arrangement of the Chief Warden, the researcher and research assistants asked the prisoners to participate in questionnaire study of "Psychology of Crime". Participants were given a set of questionnaire. Before completing the response to questionnaire, the researcher provided a detail explanation to each participant until they fully understand how to complete it. On the other hand, the rest of assistants helped the prisoners who have visionary defects and are illiterate to be able to complete the questionnaires. Eventually, the data collection was completely done on 6-9-2010.

Moreover, the researcher also approached the members of comparison group, who were almost matched with those of criminal group in sex and age, to participate in that questionnaire study. Data collection for the comparison group was conducted in the same procedure as used in criminal groups.

Results and Discussion

Results

Demographic Variables

The demographic variables of the criminals in the present sample, such as sex, education level, family background, places they live, are presented in the following tables in detail.

Differences between Criminals and Non-Criminals

A Z test analysis was done to determine whether the intelligence test scores between criminal group and non-criminal were different. As expected, the respondents of the non-criminal group have higher intelligence test scores (M = 39.39) than those of the criminal group (M = 24.76), Z (184) = 11.7, <.001. According to this result, hypothesis 1 was supported.

In order to examine differences between non-criminal group and criminal group in self-concept, a Z test was performed. As hypothesized, respondents of the non-criminal group have more positive self-image (27.23) than those of the criminal group (22.66), Z (184) = 7.22, <.001. Hence, hypothesis 2 was supported, too.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the criminals and non-criminals

	Crime	Normal
Sex		
Female	22(11.89%)	22(11.89%)
Male	163(88.11%)	163(88.11%)
Educational Level		
College graduate level	7(3.78%)	113(61.08%)
High school level	19(10.26%)	57(30.81%)
Middle school level	52(20.08%)	10(5.41%)
Primary school level	86(46.44%)	5(2.70%)
Illiterate	21(11.34%)	0(0%)
Family Background		
Broken home	69(37.26%)	48(25.95%)
Intact home	116(62.70%)	137(74.05%)

Table 2. Differences between non-criminal group and criminal group

	Non-criminal (Means)	Criminal (Means)	Z value	Sig.
Intelligence	39.39	24.76	11.70	.001
Self-Concept	27.23	22.66	7.25	.001
Self-Awareness	38.29	37.62	0.85	ns
Self-Regulation	26.03	23.88	3.98	.01
Self-Motivation	36.71	39.12	-2.59	.01
Empathy	39.41	40.69	-1.49	ns
Social Skill	33.61	32.96	0.87	ns

A Z test was done to determine whether the Self-Awareness Scale Scores of the Emotional Intelligence Inventory between criminal group and non-criminal group were different. Although expected, there were not much differences between the respondents of the non-criminal group (M = 38.29) and those of the criminal group (M = 37.662), Z (184) = .85, and it was not statistically significant. According to this result, hypothesis 3 was not supported by the present sample.

A Z test was done to determine whether the Self-Regulation Scale Scores of the Emotional Intelligence Inventory between criminal group and non-criminal group were different. As expected, respondents of non-criminal group (M = 26.03) have more self-regulation than those of criminal group (M = 23.88), Z (184) = 3.98, < .001.

A Z test was done to determine whether the Empathy Scale Scores of the Emotional Intelligence Inventory between criminal group and non-criminal group were different. Although expected, there were not much differences in empathy between the respondents of the non-criminal group (M = 39.41) and those of the criminal group (M = 40.69), Z (184) = –1.49 and it was not statistically significant. According to this result, hypothesis 5 was not supported by the present sample.

Inter-correlation among Variables

The present study examined the inter-correlation among variables. The results of the correlation coefficients may be seen in Table 12.

The present study has hypothesized that there are no differences in social skill and self-motivation between the non-criminal group and the criminal group. In order to examine this hypothesis, two Z tests were performed. According to the results, the hypothesis was partially supported. As hypothesized, there were not much differences in social skill between the non-criminal group (33.61) and the criminal group (32.96), Z (184) = .87 and it was not statistically significant. However, one sub scale which was the Self-Motivation Scale, the scores of criminal group (M = 39.12) were unexpectedly higher than those scores of non-criminal group (M = 36.71), Z (184) = – 2.59, < .005.

Table 3. Inter-correlation among variables

	Self-Awa	Self-Regu	Self-Moti	Empathy	Social Skill	Self-Concept
Self-Regulation	.33**	–				
Self-Motivation	.57**	.09	–			
Empathy	.32**	–.02	.42**	–		
Social Skill	.39**	.22**	.45**	.47**	–	
Self-Concept	.20**	.28**	.01	–.02	.23**	–
IQ	–.03	.15**	–.11*	–.03	.05	.34**

** $P < .01$ level (2-talied).   * $P < .05$ level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Demographic Variables of the Criminals and Non-Criminals

In comparison with non-criminals, according to the results of the present study, the majority of the criminals in the present sample were individuals with lower education level (See in Table 1). Very few of them (3.87%) were college graduates and the rest of the criminals had basic educational level. Some of them (11.34%) were even illiterates. This fact may be due to lower intelligence or inability of schooling in their childhood. Moreover, the result shows that over one third of the criminals (37.26%) came from broken homes in comparison with non criminals (See in Table 1). Both of the lower educational level and broken home family background may be factors which contribute them to committing crime.

Lack of Positive Self-Image

In comparison with non-criminals, the result shows, the criminals in the present sample have a well-developed concept of self such more negative image as bad, not likable, undesirable, unsentimental, worthless individual, individual with attachment to nobody and no future than their counterparts. The facts of low education and coming from broken home may cause the criminals feeling of inferiority, negative self-image as worthless individual, and lack of self-control. Thus, they may easily commit a crime without controlling themselves.

Intelligence of the Criminals

There is a premise about intelligence of the criminals, according to which, people who are intellectually super-normal are sometimes apt to become frustrated on the level of the common normal life, and then they sometimes for their super mental power to criminality. In these cases, the crime generally is well planned and the crime techniques so refined and perfected that many are never discovered or brought to account.

However, Shulman (1951) has proved that about 60 percents of persons who commit crimes have a reasonably low intelligence and have failed a year of school once or more. The results of present study were consistent with Shulman's finding. In comparison with non-criminals, the criminal in the present study have lower intelligence test scores than their counterparts. This type of person has difficulty in obtaining work, and to stay unemployed. This results in unemployment and in order

to obtain the needed money he commits a crime. The crime pattern is usually characterized by clumsiness without refined planning. This type of criminal is caught more easily than the more intelligent criminal. Moreover, because of the low intelligence, they might be unable to decide whether their deeds are right or wrong.

Emotional Intelligence and Committing Crime

Emotional or social intelligence involves at least five types of skills: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skill (Goleman, 1995). Daniel Goleman said that success requires skill handling emotions, not just being smart. And, he said that there is a correlation between lack of emotional intelligence and crime. According to him, three things make a person likely to commit a crime: impulsivity, poor anger control and lack of empathy.

Of five types of skills in Emotional Intelligence, the present study hypothesized, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy might be correlated with crime and these skills will be lower in criminal than of non-criminals. In the present sample, however, there was not much difference in self-awareness and empathy skills between the criminal group and non-criminal group. Nevertheless, the findings, of present study isolated the self-regulation component from other Emotional Intelligence components because it was found that there was significant difference in self-regulation between the criminal group and the non-criminal group. This finding is partially consistent with Goldman's assumption, lack of self-regulation skills leads to impulsivity and poor anger control.

Moreover, the present study unexpectedly found that the self-motivation Scale scores of criminals were higher than that of non-criminals. This finding explained two possibilities. The criminals in the present sample were lower in intelligence and educational level. As assumed earlier, they have difficulty in obtaining work and to stay unemployed. However, they might have higher self-motivation to succeed and so that they commit a crime. Another possibility is that the criminals of the present sample were persons who were imprisoned in the Mandalay Prison and in order to survive in the prison, imprisonment boosted their self-motivation.

Based on the findings of the present study, we could conclude as follow:

1.   Low education level due to lower intelligence is one of the causes of committing crime.

2.   Moreover, according to Emotional Intelligence experts, we have an emotional mind and a rational mind. In large part, our emotional mind developed to help us survive. When man first wandered the earth anytime he encountered some new experience, he needed to make instant decisions about whether the encounter involved something that he could eat or something that might try and eat him. To rely on the rational mind, which works much slower than the emotional mind, might have meant the end of mankind. The emotional mind springs into action much quicker than the rational mind. But being unable to control the emotional mind, we will make lots of bad decisions and poor choices such as committing crime.

3.   Initial premise and research into Emotional Intelligence suggest it was a prominent risk factor in committing crime. However, the present research has not found such a strong relationship. Apparently not all emotional intelligence skills--self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, self-motivation and social skill--contribute to

committing crime; only one characteristic, lack of self-regulation is a closely related contributor to committing crime. Moreover, the lack of positive self-concept is an important factor which can contribute to lack of self-control. Nevertheless, we will need to confirm this finding by further studies.

Limitation of the Present Study

The present study was an ex post facto research. That is why the present study has three major weaknesses: (1) the inability to manipulate independent variables in the study, such as Emotional Intelligence, Intelligence, and Self-Concept of the criminals who were in the prison; (2) the lack of power to randomize the prison inmates; and (3) the risk of improper interpretation, to say whether they committed crimes because they had negative self-image or vice versa.

Future Plan

In order to overcome the weaknesses of the present study, the effect of imprisonment on the criminals will be controlled in future research relations to Emotional Intelligence and crime. Moreover, future research will use random sampling method to cover representative sample of criminals in the prison.

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