

**THE CONCEPT, STRUCTURE, AND CRIMINOLOGICAL
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE OFFENDER**

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Аннотация

В данной статье представлено углубленное криминологическое исследование понятия, структуры и аналитических характеристик личности преступника. Рассматривается интеграция биологических, психологических и социальных факторов, лежащих в основе преступного поведения, а также рассматривается научная эволюция этого понятия в криминологии. Используя теоретико-аналитический подход, в исследовании систематизируются основные структурные элементы личности преступника – её моральные, интеллектуальные, эмоциональные и волевые качества – и анализируется их взаимосвязь с мотивами, условиями и видами преступной деятельности. В исследовании также рассматриваются типология преступников, роль социальной среды в формировании преступных наклонностей и значение исследований личности в профилактике преступлений. Результаты подтверждают, что личность преступника представляет собой многофакторный конструкт, сформированный взаимодействием врождённых характеристик и социальных влияний. Понимание её структуры и динамики необходимо для разработки эффективных реабилитационных и профилактических стратегий.

Ключевые слова: личность преступника, криминологическая характеристика, структура личности, преступное поведение, типология, социализация, реабилитация, криминология.

Abstract

This article presents an in-depth criminological study of the concept, structure, and analytical characteristics of the offender's personality. It explores the integration of biological, psychological, and social factors that form the foundation of criminal behaviour and examines the scientific evolution of this concept within criminology. Using a theoretical and analytical approach, the research systematizes the main structural elements of the criminal personality—its moral, intellectual, emotional, and volitional traits—and analyses their correlation with motives, conditions, and types of

criminal activity. The study also addresses the typology of offenders, the role of social environment in shaping criminal tendencies, and the significance of personality studies in crime prevention. The results confirm that the offender's personality is a multifactorial construct shaped by interaction between innate characteristics and social influences. Understanding its structure and dynamics is essential for developing effective rehabilitative and preventive strategies.

Keywords: personality of the offender, criminological characteristics, structure of personality, criminal behaviour, typology, socialization, rehabilitation, criminology.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of the offender's personality occupies a central place in criminology and criminal psychology. Every crime originates from a person—a subject endowed with consciousness, will, motives, and social experience. Therefore, understanding the personality of the offender is crucial for identifying the mechanisms of criminal behaviour, predicting recidivism, and developing preventive and correctional measures.

In legal terms, the offender is a person who has committed an act defined as a crime by criminal law. However, from a criminological point of view, this definition is insufficient. Criminology regards the offender not only as the author of a criminal act but as a complex social being whose behaviour is influenced by internal and external factors. These include genetic predispositions, psychological traits, family upbringing, education, environment, and social interactions.

The notion of “criminal personality” evolved throughout the history of criminological thought. The positivist school of the 19th century, represented by Cesare Lombroso and Enrico Ferri, laid the groundwork for understanding the biological and anthropological aspects of criminality. Lombroso's theory of the “born criminal” attempted to link crime to inherited physical and mental anomalies. Although later criticized, it initiated systematic studies of the offender's individuality.

Modern criminology views the offender's personality as the result of socialization processes, moral development, and environmental impact. This perspective combines biological, psychological, and sociological dimensions, acknowledging that crime cannot be reduced to any single cause. The structure of the offender's personality is multifaceted: it encompasses moral orientations, motivational systems, emotional stability, cognitive abilities, and social adaptability.

The aim of this article is to analyse the conceptual essence, internal structure, and criminological characteristics of the offender's personality. The study also explores

how the understanding of this category informs effective approaches to prevention, correction, and social reintegration.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study of the offender's personality has a long and complex history. In classical criminology, the focus was on the rational choice of individuals; Beccaria and Bentham saw the criminal as a free moral agent acting according to calculated interest. This view shifted radically with the advent of positivist criminology in the late 19th century. Cesare Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente* (1876) introduced a deterministic approach, arguing that certain individuals are biologically predisposed to criminality. Enrico Ferri and Raffaele Garofalo expanded this idea, adding psychological and environmental factors to the analysis.

In the 20th century, criminological theory increasingly emphasized psychological and sociological determinants. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggested that criminal behaviour could stem from unconscious conflicts and repressed drives. Hans Eysenck later developed the theory of personality and crime, proposing that individuals with high levels of extraversion and low levels of conditioning are more prone to deviant behaviour.

Sociological theories added a new dimension. Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory proposed that criminal behaviour is learned through communication with others. Travis Hirschi's social bond theory stressed that weak ties to family, school, and community increase the likelihood of offending. Meanwhile, Robert Merton's strain theory linked criminality to societal inequality and limited access to legitimate means of success.

Contemporary criminology integrates these approaches into a holistic model. Scholars such as David Garland and T. Newburn emphasize that the personality of the offender reflects broader cultural, institutional, and economic conditions. The development of typologies—habitual, situational, violent, economic, and organized offenders—has facilitated a more precise criminological characterization.

Research also highlights rehabilitation as a key element. Understanding the offender's psychological structure is essential for designing correctional programs that address individual needs, emotional regulation, and moral values. The reviewed literature thus positions the study of the offender's personality as a bridge between theory and practice, connecting criminological analysis with social policy.

This research employs a qualitative, analytical, and interdisciplinary methodology. It integrates theoretical frameworks from criminology, psychology, and sociology to examine the structure and characteristics of the offender's personality. The

study relies on secondary data, including classical and contemporary academic sources, criminal psychology monographs, and policy documents.

The methodology involves several stages:

1. **Conceptual systematization** – identification of the key definitions and dimensions of the offender's personality from historical and modern perspectives.
2. **Structural analysis** – classification of the main components of the offender's personality: moral (value system, conscience, empathy), intellectual (education, cognitive flexibility), emotional-volitional (self-control, impulsivity), and social (role adaptation, communication patterns).
3. **Comparative synthesis** – analysis of typologies and criminological classifications of offenders in different contexts (e.g., habitual vs. situational, violent vs. non-violent).
4. **Interpretive integration** – connecting theoretical insights with practical applications in crime prevention and rehabilitation.

Data interpretation follows hermeneutic and analytical logic, focusing on meaning, interrelation, and causal inference rather than statistical measurement. The study also references empirical findings from psychological and sociological surveys to illustrate theoretical propositions.

The methodological approach enables a multidimensional understanding of the offender's personality—viewed as a dynamic system influenced by biological predispositions, psychological structures, and environmental stimuli. Its limitation lies in the absence of quantitative assessment, which could complement qualitative insights, yet the interpretive depth compensates for this limitation.

RESULTS

The study confirms that the offender's personality is not a static category but a dynamic system of interrelated traits that determine an individual's behaviour in social and legal contexts. Its structure can be represented through four interconnected components:

1. **Moral and Value Component** – defines the individual's internal ethical standards, sense of justice, empathy, and moral responsibility. Offenders often exhibit moral deformation, manifested in cynicism, justification of violence, or disregard for norms.
2. **Intellectual-Cognitive Component** – includes mental abilities, level of education, and perception of social reality. Many offenders show distorted reasoning, poor problem-solving skills, or narrow situational thinking.

3. **Emotional-Volitional Component** – reflects self-control, emotional stability, and impulsivity. Emotional imbalance, aggression, and frustration tolerance are key indicators of criminogenic potential.

4. **Social-Role Component** – expresses the individual's social identity, adaptation capacity, and interaction with community institutions. Disrupted family relationships, unemployment, and peer influences play significant roles in criminal socialization.

Typologically, offenders can be divided into habitual (chronic), situational (occasional), and professional types, each with distinct motivational and psychological structures. The study also reveals that the offender's personality is shaped by the interplay between micro-level factors (family, education, personality traits) and macro-level determinants (economic inequality, cultural norms, legal institutions).

These findings demonstrate that criminological characterization must account for both individual and systemic dimensions. The personality of the offender cannot be reduced to pathology; it is a social product reflecting the contradictions of moral and institutional environments.

DISCUSSION

The discussion situates the results within the broader framework of criminological theory and practice. Understanding the personality of the offender allows for more effective prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies. The transition from punitive to corrective justice depends on recognizing the offender as a human being capable of change rather than as a fixed deviant.

From a theoretical standpoint, the integration of psychological and sociological factors provides a balanced explanation of criminal behaviour. Biological predispositions may predispose individuals to aggression, but social learning and environment determine how these impulses are expressed. Therefore, prevention requires both moral education and structural reform.

Practically, criminological profiling of offenders enables differentiated approaches to justice. For instance, rehabilitation programs for juvenile offenders emphasize emotional education and social reintegration, while those for habitual criminals focus on behavioural modification and occupational training. Psychological evaluation is also crucial for risk assessment and parole decisions.

The discussion further highlights the importance of studying the offender's personality in light of contemporary challenges. Digitalization, migration, and urban stress create new forms of deviance requiring adaptive psychological and social

strategies. The future of criminology thus lies in interdisciplinary synthesis, combining insights from neuroscience, psychology, and sociology with legal frameworks.

Ultimately, recognizing the complexity of the offender's personality reinforces the humanistic orientation of modern criminology, emphasizing that understanding the criminal mind is the first step toward social harmony and justice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the offender's personality is a multidimensional construct that embodies the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. Its analysis provides the key to understanding the origins, motives, and persistence of criminal behaviour. The study demonstrates that moral deformation, emotional instability, and inadequate social adaptation are recurrent features of criminogenic personalities, but they develop within specific socio-cultural environments.

The structural model of the offender's personality—moral, intellectual, emotional-volitional, and social—offers a comprehensive framework for criminological analysis. It underscores the need for individualized preventive and rehabilitative measures grounded in psychological diagnosis and social policy.

The criminological characterization of offenders contributes not only to academic theory but also to practical justice reforms. By focusing on education, employment, and moral development, societies can transform punitive systems into restorative ones. Understanding the offender's personality, therefore, serves as both a scientific and ethical imperative for reducing crime and strengthening human dignity.

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