

Impact Of Life Experiences On Mental Health Of Criminal And Non-Criminal Women In AJK And KP

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Abstract

The rate of female crime has grown rapidly in recent years in Pakistan. Criminal women are likely to have negative life experiences. Current research aimed to examine the effect of positive and negative life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women. Two measures (Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (Diener et al., 2010), and Mental Health Inventory (Zafar & Kausar, 2016) were used. Purposive sample of 200 women (criminal = 100, noncriminal = 100) were taken from different areas of AJK and KP to assess their life experiences and mental health. Results revealed significant positive correlation with positive life experiences and mental health among non-criminal women and significant negative relationship with negative life experiences and mental health among criminal women. Positive life experiences showed significant impact on mental health of non-criminal. Negative life experiences showed significant impact on mental health of criminal women. It was concluded that positive and negative life experiences effect mental health of criminal and non-criminal women. Findings of current research are helpful to understand negative life experiences of criminal women.

Keywords: Criminality, Mental Health, Life Experiences.

Introduction

Criminality is a term in which individuals break the law of state or country. Violent crimes and property crimes are two broad categories of crimes. Dimensions of delinquent behavior include reckless behavior, authority conflict, overt Domestic violence, robbery, sex crimes and homicides are the further categories of violent crimes. Fraud and theft are also known as categories of property crimes. Individuals who commit crimes show delinquent behavior. According to justice system delinquent behavior of individual is known as crime. Smuggling, narcotics, use of alcohol, prostitution, murder, attempt to murder, and

robbery were most common crimes among women in Pakistan (Felson & Boba, 2010).

A study was conducted on women criminality in Pakistan. Researcher collected data from 291 offenders. After analyzing data it was concluded that effective issues of women criminality were revenge, deprivation, peer crowd, social quarrels and family culture (Warraich & Farooq, 2015).

Economic deprivation, problematic family relationships and women early victimization are associated with criminal activities in female prisoners. Data of 114 prisoner women Pakistan

was collected. They concluded that lack of empowerment, poverty; anger and revenge

were associated with women offender in criminal activities (Khalid & Khan, 2013).

Rationale of Study

In today's world not only men but women also have been found responsible for all kinds of criminal behaviors. Though various factors could lead them towards criminality and might have negative impact on mental health. In this perspective present study investigated the effect of fantasy and life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women.

Previous studies also demonstrated relationship of Life experiences with different variables such as adult criminality, development of individuals and females criminality (Perez, 2016) studies also demonstrated the relationship of mental health with other variables such as criminal behavior, delinquency in adolescent, trauma, sociodemographic of prisoners and stress of prisoners (Gottfried, & Christopher, 2017). These variables were not study together in previous researches.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women.

Hypothesis

The hypotheses of the present study were

1. There would exist positive relationship between positive life experience and mental health among non-criminal

Research Design

Current research study is quantifiable, cross sectional in nature where survey method was used.

Sample

Sample size comprised of 200 women residing in jails of AJK and KPK. Purposive sampling technique was used for sample selection. Purposive or judgmental sampling is type of

The picture of this sample with different variables in Pakistani context is as follows. In Pakistan only few studies have been conducted on criminal women (Warrach & Farooq, 2015) which examined other variables related to criminal women such as cultural and socio demographic, physical and mental health problems of female offenders in jails.

Women crime increase day by day that's why this sample needed to be explored. In current study idea of this sample with these variables comes up in my mind because very rare work found on this sample in Pakistan. No proportional study on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women was found during literature review in Pakistani context. Therefore, present research comprised both criminal and non-criminal women from Azad Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

women whereas negative life experiences would have negative relationship with mental health of criminal women.

2. Positive life experiences would have positive effect on mental health of non-criminal women whereas negative life experiences would have negative effect on mental health of criminal women.

non-probability sampling; in which researcher rely on their own judgments when choosing members of population to participate in study (Lavrakas, 2008).

For selection of sample of criminal women proper right criteria was used. After getting approval from ASRB committee of Hazara University Mansehra permission letter for data collection was taken from head of department of psychology, head of jails (Masud. Ur Rahman) and Deputy Inspector General (Syed Liaqat Hussain Naqvi). Data was collected

from prisoned women residing in jails and non-criminal women of AJK and KP; 350 questionnaires were distributed from which 200 were part of study.

Measures

Scale of Positive and Negative Experience

In 2010 Diener and his colleagues constructed the Positive and Negative Life Experience Scale. It contains 12 items. Six items measure the positive experiences. Six measure negative experiences. The response categories for scale are one to five. Reliability of scale was ($\alpha = .81$). Current reliability of scale of positive experience is ($\alpha = .83$). Current reliability of scale of negative experience was ($\alpha = .81$). Scale is five point likert scale. Both the summed positive (SPANE-P) score and the negative (SPANE-N) score can range from 6 to 30. Highest score in scale of positive experience indicate maximum positive experience and highest score in scale of negative experience indicate maximum negative experience. Urdu version scale was used.

Mental Health Inventory

MHI translated version developed by (Zafar & Kausar, 2016) was used. The reliability of scale was ($\alpha = .93$). 13 items of Mental Health Inventory that relate to psychological wellbeing were used in current study. Current internal consistency of scale is (.96). Higher psychological wellbeing showed that higher mental health. The score range is 13 – 78. The answers are given on a six-point Likert scale.

Results

Present study was performed to find out the impact of life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women. Statistical analysis was done by using SPSS 26. The Alpha

Response categorize varies from item to item. Higher score represent greater mental health.

Procedure

An ethical approval for data collection was obtained from head of department of psychology and from head of jails (inspector General of prisons Khyber Pakhtun khwa, Masud ur Rahman and Deputy inspector General of Azad Jammu Kashmir Syed Liaqat Hussain Naqvi. Data of 100 criminal women was collected from different jails of AJK and KP by using questionnaires. Sample comprised of women residing in jails of AJK and KP.

Respondents were ensured that information would not share to public media and this data collection was purpose of M.Phil degree. The participants 120 criminal women and 200 non-criminal women were approached by using purposive sampling technique. Three scales (Fantasy scale, scale of positive and negative experience and mental health inventory) in Urdu version along with demographic sheet were administrated to women participant. Respondents were instructed to give response on each and every item of questionnaire. Respondent were thanked for their participation and cooperation in study. Data of 200 women were included in the study.

Data Analyses

Data were analyzed through appropriate statistical procedure by using SPSS version 26. Correlation analysis was used to find out the relationship between variables. Simple linear regression analysis was used.

reliability and inter item correlation of all questionnaires was measured. Effect of life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women were examined.

Table 1

Psychometric Properties, Scale of Positive Experience (SPE), Scale of Negative Experience (SNE) and Mental Health Inventory (N =200)

Scale	Number		SD	α	Range		
	items	M			Potential	Actual	Skewness
SPE	6	20.01	5.833	.83	6-30	7-28	-.144
SNE	6	16.70	5.795	.81	6-30	6-27	.271
MHI	13	45.21	17.252	.96	13-78	13-75	-.123

Note. SPE = scale of positive experience; SNE = scale of negative experiences; MHI = mental health inventory; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

Table 1 indicated that SPE, SNE, and MHI have high reliability values that are .83, .81, and .96 is excellent reliability due to cut-off points for reliability, (0.90 and above) show excellent

internal consistency, high internal consistency is (0.70-0.90). Alpha values range from .81 to .96. Skewness value indicates adequate normality of data

Table 2

Correlation Coefficient among Scale of Positive Experience, and Mental Health Inventory (N = 100 non criminals)

Measures	1	2	M	SD
1 SPE	-	.721**	24.94	2.831
2 MHI		-	59.78	7.970

Note. SPE= scale of positive experience; MHI = mental health inventory; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

** P < .01.

Table 2 indicated that Scale of positive experience has significant positive correlation with mental health inventory (MHI).

Table 3

Correlation Coefficient among Scale of Negative Experience and Mental Health Inventory (N= 100 Criminals)

Measures	1	2	M	SD
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1 SNE	-.434**	21.22	4.212
2 MHI		30.65	10.310

Note. SNE = scale of negative experience; MHI = mental health inventory; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

**p < .01.

Table 3 show Scale of negative experience (SNE) has significant negative correlation with mental health inventory (MHI).

Table 4

Linear Regression showing Scale of Positive Experience (Independent Variable) as Predictor of Mental Health (Dependent Variable) among non-criminal Women and Scale of Negative Experience (Independent variable) as Predictor of Mental Health (Dependent Variable) among criminal Women (N=200)

Variables	R	R ²	B	β	F	SE
SPE	.520	.520	1.180	.720***	104.480	.289
SNE	.18	.18	-1.040	-.431***	21.692	.224

Note. R = r square; R² = r square change; B = unstandardized beta; β = standardized beta; F = change; SE = standard error.

***p < .001.

Table 4 revealed scale of positive experience to be significant positive predictor of mental health as $\beta = .720$, $t = 10.22$, $p = .000$. Regression analysis revealed positive life experiences brought 52% variation in mental health among noncriminal women $\Delta R = .52$, $\Delta F (1, 98) = 104.480$.

Results also revealed that scale of negative experiences statistically significant negative predictor of mental health as $\beta = -.431$, $t = .24$, $p = .000$. Regression analysis revealed negative life experiences brought 18% of variance in mental health among criminal women, $\Delta R = .18$, $\Delta F (1, 98) = 21.69$.

Discussion

The aim of study was to explore the impact of life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women. Two Urdu version instruments on sample (N = 200, n = 100 criminals, n = 100 non criminals) women were used. Reliability values of all sub scales (MHI, SNE, SPE are .96, .81, .83 respectively (see table1).

Current research revealed positive experience had positive relationship with mental health of

non-criminal women (see table 2). Positive experiences about work and everyday responsibilities benefit mental health. Aim of study was to measure whether positive feelings benefit for mental health to the same degree as physical health. Sample of 181 individuals was selected. Results concluded that sense of pride (positive experience) because of taking care of others and meaningful work was linked with better mental health (Dich et al., 2019).

Current research revealed scale of negative experience had significant negative relationship

with mental health of criminal women (see table 3). A study was conducted on sample (N = 16) female offender in Switzerland. It was concluded that female offenders, were victims of adverse life experiences. Offender behavior of females occurs due to mental health issues. Study concluded that adverse experiences of female offenders had negative relationship with psychological health of criminals (Rossegger et al., 2009).

Present study revealed positive experience as positive predictor of mental health among non-criminal women (see table 4). Study was conducted in India on 604 individuals. The purpose of research was to examine the effect

Conclusion

It was concluded that. It was also demonstrated that positive life experiences had significant positive correlation with mental health of non-criminal women. Negative life experiences have significant negative relationship with mental health of criminal women.

Positive life experiences had significant positive effect on mental health of non-criminal women whereas negative life experiences had significant negative impact on mental health of criminal women.

Limitation

Present study was conducted only on educated women sample. Present study had small sample size. Present study conducted only on AJK and KP so results cannot widely generalized.

Suggestions

It is suggested that future research should be on large sample of criminal women. It is suggested that future research should be on both genders (criminal and non-criminal sample of men and women) because it may help to understand comparative aspects of gender-based crimes on mental health.

It is recommended that future research should take sample of criminal women from other areas of Pakistan as well.

of positive feelings on psychological health. It was found that positive feelings predict of individuals psychological health. It was also examined that positive feelings and mental health were positively correlated (Singh & Junnarkar, 2015).

Results revealed scale of negative experience as significant negative predictor of mental health among criminal women (see table 4). A study was conducted in US on sample of 500 women offender. Aim of study was to find out impact of early traumatic events on mental health of offenders. It was found that early negative experiences had strong impact on mental health of offenders (Messina & Grella, 2006).

Awareness raising workshops should be organized for improving mental health of criminal women. Non-government organizations should play an active role in this regard for welfare of female offender's in jails. Some activity-based work should be organized for convicted criminals to improve their mental health. Healthy activities like, informal education classes, skill trainings, vocational trainings, religious and awareness classes should be offered in jails in Pakistan.

Implications of Current Research

Findings of current research are helpful to understand the life experiences on mental health of criminal and non-criminal women. Current research is also beneficial in field of criminology, as it is to address life experiences of criminal women. It is helpful for individuals to cope positively whenever they faced adverse experiences. Current study's findings might be capable to develop educational and awareness programs for criminal women or any other policy related to awareness of laws.

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