Psychology and Biology in Crime

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Biological and Psychological Factors in Crime

**Introduction**

Criminology was created as a discipline long before it was recognized as a science. These days, the importance of this science have written tenfold due to the sudden surge in criminal activities. According to this science, several biological and psychological factors have contributed to the recent development and increase of criminal activities in the world. In this paper, we will discuss these factors separately so that we can reach an understanding of the factors that contribute to the rise of crime and deviance in our society (Smallbone, 2006).

**Biological factors**

Many criminologists think that certain biological factors cause criminal behavior and deviance in people, although many scholars agree that these factors may not be as assertive as they are thought to be. The most prominent of these biological factors are discussed in the theory of Cesare Lombroso. He thinks that criminals have certain facial characteristics that separate them from the average people. In simple words, Lombroso thinks that people with criminal tendencies can be identified by the shape of their skull or deformity in their facial features. A simpler version of this theory is that a person is born criminal and his facial features are "primitive and not ethnical". Lombroso’s theory is regarded as one of the oldest theories that have made a decent attempt to explain criminal and deviant behavior.

This theory can be categorized as the first decent attempt to understand why people choose the life of crime and deviance. Although, we can agree that this theory is not successful in any way to study criminal tendencies and prevent people to peruse the life of crime. Rather, we can say that this theory creates segregated groups from the start and ends up pushing people in criminal circles.

**Psychological factors**

Many scholars believe that psychological theories are a better and justifiable answer to the rise of criminal behavior in society. These theories often cite the psychological factors that are responsible for creating criminal tendencies in a person. Many theorists believe that the lack of socialization is one of the key factors that push the average person towards the life of crime and deviance. Sigmund Freud, one of the most psychologists of all time, tries to explain his findings on the terms based on the parts of a person's psychology that he names as Id, Ego, and Superego. Another psychologist, Erikson pointed out that criminal tendencies are created by the expectations of a person that are often not fulfilled by society.

We can see that psychological factors of lack of socialization and unfulfilling expectations can be the cause of rebellious behavior in a person. These factors can affect the psyche of a person that may incite her towards criminal behavior, like stealing, robbing, and even murder, as their expectations are not met. Many examples can confirm such behavior in humankind, which not only makes these factors more supportive in various arguments but also make these theories plausible in understanding the tendencies of crime and deviance in people.

**Conclusion**

The subject of criminology often ends up using both social and biological factors simultaneously in the explanation of criminal activities that occur in our surroundings. This statement can be regarded as true as each theory has certain shortcomings that are addressed in the other. The best approach that can be used to contain the current crime spree is grounded in the study of both the factors at the same time. We can use both kinds of factors to analyze, predict and explain criminal and deviant conduct to work for its containment.

# References

Smallbone, S. W. (2006). Social and Psychological Factors in the Development of Delinquency and Sexual Deviance. In W. L. Howard E. Barbaree, *The Juvenile Sex Offender* (pp. 105-127). New York: The Guilford Press.