

Innovations

Psychology and criminal justice system in America

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Abstract

This paper discusses the roles that Psychology plays in the American Criminal Justice System. It elucidated on theories of criminal behaviour and how psychological assessments and treatments can be employed in the treatment of offenders, both adult and juvenile. The paper concluded that psychologists can facilitate the treatment and rehabilitation of criminals as well as young offenders by offering mental health care and counselling services. Psychologists will contribute significantly to the criminal justice system by ensuring that young offenders receive the proper interventions and treatment as well as by encouraging their recovery and reintegration into society. There must, therefore, be collaboration and cooperation between experts in the field of mental health (psychologists inclusive) and law enforcement agents, public offenders, prosecutors, court personnel and advocates.

Keynote: *Psychology; Criminal; Juvenile; Justice System in America*

Introduction

The goal of the American criminal justice system, which has many facets and is always changing, is to uphold social order and safeguard citizens. This goal is served by the system's various players, institutions, and procedures. For a very long time, the criminal justice system has been interested in researching and studying criminal behaviour, particularly the psychological factors that underlie it. According to Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), people pick up illegal behaviour by watching and copying others. Intelligence, behavioural manipulations, traits, disorders among other social and environmental variables, and inclusive psychological aspects are all potential causes of criminal behaviour (Valente & Vacchiano, 2021; Khan, et al., 2015). The criminal justice system offers therapy and rehabilitation programs to address these issues to address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour.

The significance of integrating psychological concepts into the criminal justice system has recently come to be better understood (Valente & Vacchiano, 2021). Traditional punishment-based techniques have been

demonstrated to be less effective than evidence-based programs that target the psychological causes of criminal conduct (Polaschek, 2023; Kemp, et al., 2020). By using psychological tests and interventions, the legal system can more effectively identify and address the underlying reasons for criminal behaviour, potentially improving results for perpetrators and society as a whole (Polaschek, 2023).

This paper discusses the different roles that psychology plays in the American criminal justice system, as well as how they intersect. It also discussed how behavioural assessments and treatments are employed in the treatment of violators, as well as the benefits and drawbacks of integrating psychology into the framework of the legal system. In the end, applying psychological concepts to the criminal justice system has the potential to significantly improve our knowledge of criminal conduct and help us create interventions and treatment plans that are more effective..

American Criminal Justice System

The American Criminal Justice System is a comprehensive system or intricate network of organizations, agencies, and procedures created to deter crime, bring criminals to justice, and protect the public. It is essential to maintaining the rule of law, enforcing the law, and delivering justice. Numerous studies have looked at various facets of the American criminal justice system, illuminating its advantages, drawbacks, and potential areas for development. According to Langan and Farrington (2018), the system is illustrated by the different federal, state, and local agencies that make up it, including courts, prisons, and law enforcement organizations. Each of these organizations is essential to sustaining the ideals of justice, equity, and due process.

The task of looking into crimes and catching perpetrators falls to law enforcement agencies. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), as well as state and municipal police departments, are some of these organizations. Instances are decided by the courts, which also determine whether those accused are guilty or innocent. The Supreme Court of the United States, which acts as the highest court in the land, is one of the courts in the judicial system along with trial and appellate courts. The custody and care of criminals who have received convictions and sentences fall under the purview of correctional facilities. Prisons, jails, and community correctional initiatives like probation and parole are included in these facilities.

The American Criminal Justice System, however, has come under fire for a variety of problems, including racial and socioeconomic inequities, excessive dependence on incarceration, and a lack of attention to rehabilitation. Alexander (2010) asserts that the criminal justice system has significantly contributed to the persistence of racial inequality and prejudice. According to her, communities of colour have been disproportionately impacted by policies like the War on Drugs and mandatory minimum sentences, which have resulted in mass incarceration. The system has also come under fire for relying too much on incarceration as a form of punishment and deterrent. With nearly 2 million people now incarcerated, the National Institute of Justice (2018) claims that the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. Critics claim that this strategy is expensive, ineffective, and fails to deal with the root causes of criminal behaviour.

The American Criminal Justice System's importance comes from its function in upholding law and order, shielding citizens from crime, and punishing offenders. The system is an essential component of society, and maintaining a secure and equitable society depends heavily on its functioning. The effectiveness and fairness of the system are still up for question, though, particularly in light of concerns like racial and socioeconomic inequities, an overreliance on punishment, and the results of mass imprisonment. The American Criminal Justice System has not been successful in lowering crime rates, according to a report by the National Research

Council. Instead, it has resulted in high rates of incarceration, especially for minorities and people from low-income backgrounds. Additionally, research has demonstrated that there is racial prejudice in the legal system, with Black Americans and other minorities more likely than White people to be detained, charged, and given longer jail sentences (Alexander, 2012). Due to these problems, there have been calls for the American Criminal Justice System to be reformed. Numerous groups have been working to change laws governing police, punishment, and the use of alternatives to imprisonment, such as rehabilitation facilities. There is no doubt that the American Criminal Justice System is relevant due to its capacity to address issues of inequity and injustice within the system as well as its role in upholding peace and order. To solve these problems, research, the involvement of other fields, diversionary programs, and community-based initiatives are required. These recommend reducing the need for jail, fostering recovery and reintegration, and addressing the underlying causes of crime.

Nexus between Psychology and American Criminal Justice System

According to Barber et.al (2019), forensic psychology is a subfield of psychology that deals with the application of psychological concepts and theories to the legal and criminal justice systems. It entails the application of scientific techniques to comprehend the actions of people who are a part of judicial proceedings, such as defendants, witnesses, and victims (Wolffram, 2020). In order to comprehend the intricate psychological elements that influence criminal behaviour and to create efficient treatments to deter crime and advance rehabilitation, the American criminal justice system has come to regard forensic psychology more and more (Gowensmith, 2019).

By providing examinations, evaluations, and expert evidence to support legal decisions, forensic psychologists serve a critical role in the criminal justice system (Horton & Soper, 2019). For instance, they might assess a defendant's level of criminal responsibility or competency to stand trial through psychological testing. They could determine the likelihood of reoffending or shed light on the psychological conditions that motivated a crime. In addition, forensic psychologists may collaborate with law enforcement organizations to create profiling strategies or support criminal investigations (Wolffram, 2020). In addition, they might offer therapy and treatment to criminal justice system inmates or victims of crime (Wolffram, 2020; Horton & Soper, 2019).

A more complex and fact-based approach to treating crime and its root causes has resulted from the incorporation of forensic psychology into the American criminal justice system. As demonstrated by McCallum and Gowensmith (2020), who examined how forensic analysis contributes to the prosecution of people with mental illnesses. It has also drawn attention to how crucial it is to take into account the psychological health of everyone involved in the system, including defendants, victims, and law enforcement officers.

Furthermore, several studies had also indicated the contribution of the field of psychology to the criminal justice system. Even today, psychology plays a big role in the criminal justice system. Illustratively, a recent study by Horsley, (2021) found that psychology can be used in the criminal justice system at several phases, including policing, courtrooms, and corrections. Assessing criminal behaviour, identifying recidivism risk factors, and creating efficient treatment plans for offenders can all be aided by psychology. Research by Katz and Windecker (2015) also emphasized the value of psychology in overcoming problems with eyewitness identification. According to the study, psychological elements like stress and bias might skew eyewitness identification results. As a result, psychologists can be instrumental in creating methods that can raise the credibility of eyewitness testimony.

Sullivan and colleagues (2015) conducted a study on "Psychological Interventions in Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Incarcerated Individuals highlighting the significance of psychological therapies. According to the study, a sizable percentage of offenders had mental health problems that the criminal justice system could not appropriately address. Therefore, integrating psychological concepts into correctional programs may improve outcomes for criminals and lower the risk that they would commit crimes again. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of psychology in the criminal justice system. Psychology can be utilized to improve outcomes for criminals and society, according to recent studies. As a result, in order to ensure that psychological principles are incorporated into all facets of the criminal justice system, criminal justice professionals should collaborate closely with psychologists.

Peterson and colleagues (2015) looked at the use of psychological evaluations in sentencing decisions to support the aforementioned. The investigation discovered that psychological tests were frequently employed to determine the defendant's mental state and the likelihood of recidivism. The study did draw attention to issues with these assessments' validity and reliability, though, which might have a big impact on how sentences are handed down. Similarly to this, a study by DeMatteo et al. (2015) investigated the use of psychological assessments in instances involving the death penalty. The study discovered that psychological assessments were frequently utilized to establish the defendant's capacity to stand trial and their state of mind at the time of the offence.

The study also emphasized how crucial it is to guarantee that psychological tests are administered fairly and impartially. Another study by Greene et al. (2015) examined how psychology can be utilized to address problems with juvenile justice. According to the study, psychological evaluations can help identify the requirements of young offenders, such as those related to their mental health and developmental difficulties. The study also stressed the significance of employing evidence-based interventions to lower juvenile offenders' recidivism rates. The research by DeMatteo et al. (2015) and Greene et al. (2015) shows how important psychology is to the criminal justice system. Criminal justice professionals can enhance outcomes for criminals and society at large by integrating psychological ideas into policing, courts, and corrections.

The efficacy of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) in reducing criminal behaviour among criminals was investigated in a study by Foynes et al. (2015). The study indicated that CBT was particularly beneficial when paired with other therapies like drug treatment and job training in lowering recidivism and increasing outcomes for offenders. Ahonen et al. (2015) looked at the use of risk assessments in predicting offenders' recidivism in a different study. According to the study, risk assessments were useful in identifying offenders who were more likely to commit crimes again, and interventions aimed at these offenders were more successful in lowering recidivism rates.

The importance of psychology in overcoming problems with eyewitness identification by Berman et al. (2015) further indicated the significant contribution of the field of psychology in criminal justice. According to the study, eyewitness identification is a difficult procedure that is prone to mistakes, and psychology can be useful in creating best practices for courts and law enforcement that will assure correct identifications. This research (Ahonen et al. 2015; Berman et al. 2015) shows how crucial psychology is to the criminal justice system in terms of creating efficient interventions, lowering recidivism rates, and enhancing the precision of eyewitness identifications. We may work toward a system that is more just, efficient, and fair by integrating psychological concepts and research into criminal justice procedures.

The perspectives of prisoners who took part in a restorative justice program examination (2021) indicate another significant role played by the use of psychological principles advancing the criminal justice system. The training had an unfavourable effect on participants' feelings of hope and agency as well as their

emotional well-being, according to the study. Programs for restorative justice, according to the authors, maybe a useful strategy to encourage recovery and lower recidivism Babchishin et al. (2022) looked at the accuracy of risk ratings for sexual offenders in a different study. The study concluded that there is a need for greater research to improve risk assessment methods that take psychological aspects into account because present risk assessment techniques do not reliably predict recidivism among sexual offenders.

The effectiveness of cognitive-behavioural treatment (CBT) in lowering anxiety and depression among those who are incarcerated was investigated by Alcántara-Abarca et al. (2021) revealing another crucial role of the field to the justice system. According to the study, CBT was successful in enhancing participants' mental health outcomes, and its advantages were maintained even after participants were let go from custody. These studies (Birkett et al., 2021; Alcántara-Abarca, 2021) emphasize the crucial part psychology plays in the criminal justice system, from encouraging rehabilitation and lowering recidivism to enhancing risk assessments and managing mental health problems among prisoners. We can work toward a system that is more compassionate, efficient, and just if we integrate psychological theories and research into criminal justice procedures.

In addition, Cook et al. (2021) investigated how cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) affected adolescent offenders' levels of rage and violence. According to the study, CBT was successful in lowering anger and hostility, and these gains persisted over time. According to the authors, CBT may be a useful intervention for lowering adolescent offenders' recidivism rates. Fearnley et al. (2021) looked into the effect of gender-responsive programming on lowering recidivism among female offenders in a different study. According to the study, women who took part in gender-responsive programs had a lower chance of committing crimes again than those who did not. The authors contend that addressing the particular needs and experiences of female offenders could be accomplished through gender-responsive programming.

According to a study by Mills et al. (2022), trauma-informed care has a positive effect on inmates' mental health results. The results of the study showed that trauma-informed therapy was beneficial in easing PTSD and depression symptoms and that these improvements persisted over time. The authors make the case that trauma-informed care may be a crucial part of the mental healthcare provided to those who are incarcerated. These studies (Mills et al. 2022; Cook et al. 2021; Fearnley et al. 2021) show the crucial part psychology plays in the criminal justice system, from encouraging rehabilitation and lowering recidivism to attending to mental health issues and offering gender-responsive programming. The improvement of the system can be achieved via efficient, egalitarian, and humane by continuing to incorporate psychological ideas and research into criminal justice processes.

Since psychology can be used at different levels of the system, including policing, courts, and corrections, it is a crucial component of the criminal justice system. Numerous research has shown that psychology can be used to assess criminal behaviour, identify recidivism risk factors, create efficient offenders' treatment programs, and enhance eyewitness identification accuracy. Better results for criminals and society at large can result from the integration of psychological ideas into criminal justice practices. Additionally, several studies have shown that cognitive-behavioural treatment (CBT) is beneficial in reducing recidivism, enhancing mental health outcomes, and lowering anger and hostility in young offenders. However, there are issues with the validity and reliability of psychological tests, and additional study is required to create better risk assessment instruments that take psychological elements into account. Programs for restorative justice can also effectively encourage rehabilitation and lower recidivism. Psychology can develop a more compassionate, efficient, and just criminal justice system by incorporating psychological theories and research into it.

Theories of Criminal Behaviour

Theories of criminal behaviour are significant because they can give us a foundation for comprehending how complicated and multifaceted criminal behaviour is (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). These ideas guide attempts at prevention and intervention by identifying the fundamental causes of criminal behaviour. Furthermore, they aid in developing therapies and scientifically supported approaches that are better suited to address the root causes of criminal conduct (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). These concepts are also essential for determining criminology and criminal justice policy and practice. They serve as a foundation for comprehending the justifications for various strategies for deterring crime and dealing out punishment (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). For instance, the creation of deterrence-based approaches to punishment, which seek to dissuade potential criminals by making the costs of crime outweigh the benefits, was influenced by the classical theory of criminal conduct. Additionally, the development of interventions that focus on underlying biological and psychological components has been According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), these interventions may involve psychotherapy, drugs, or other types of therapy tailored to the individual requirements of offenders, hence a theory cannot fully explain all criminal behaviour due to its complexity. However, these concepts serve to clarify the underlying reasons for criminal behaviour and to direct efforts at prevention and intervention (Holmstrom, 2018).

The classical theory, a criminological perspective that strongly emphasizes the significance of deterrence in reducing crime, first came into existence in the 18th century. According to the conventional theory, people make logical decisions based on cost-benefit analyses. If the costs of committing a crime are greater than the possible profits, people will be deterred from doing so. Classical ideas have had a tremendous influence on the criminal justice system, notably in terms of punishment and sentencing. The principle states that a crime requires an instantaneous, certain, and proportionate response. This is so that people will be discouraged from committing crimes by a rapid and certain penalty that increases the perceived cost of doing so.

A viewpoint known as the "classical theory of criminal behaviour" first appeared in the eighteenth century and was made popular by intellectuals like Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria (Schofield, 2019). The hypothesis makes the supposition that people are rational and that free will is what causes criminal activity. According to the notion, people commit crimes when the benefits of the crime outweigh the penalties. One of the key concepts of the conventional view is that punishment must be swift, certain, and severe for criminal behaviour (Georgoulas, 2021). This view contends that punishment ought to be administered to deter criminal activity rather than as an act of vengeance or retaliation. It suggests that punishment ought to be administered in a fashion that is visible and accessible to the general public and that it ought to be proportionate to the gravity of the offence committed (Chapman et al., 2022).

There are various drawbacks to the classical theory. This theory has been criticized mostly for failing to take into consideration how psychological and social elements play a part in criminal behaviour. It makes the unfounded assumption that all people act rationally and exclusively weigh the apparent costs and advantages of their choices, which isn't always the case. Furthermore, the traditional approach makes the unrealistic assumption that everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources (Chapman, et al., 2022). The classical theory has contributed significantly to the fields of criminology and criminal justice, despite its drawbacks. In many nations, the theory has had a significant role in influencing criminal justice procedures and legislation, notably in the areas of punishment and deterrence (Abramovaitė, et al., 2022). The evolution of legal systems all over the world, notably in the fields of criminal law and punishment, has been impacted by classical thought as well. The importance of evidence-based approaches to criminal justice, including the use of empirical research to inform policies and practices, has also been established by classical theory (Chestnoy & Samokhina, 2020).

Understanding the origins and effects of criminal behaviour has been greatly aided by psychological theories. These theories offer a framework for comprehending the psychological mechanisms behind criminal behaviour and guide the creation of interventions and therapies intended to deal with the underlying causes of crime (Erez, 2019; Ward, 2019; Hollin, 2019). Three of the most influential psychological theories of criminal behaviour will be examined in this chapter: the psychodynamic theory, the cognitive-behavioural theory, and the social learning theory. Analyze the underlying assumptions of each theory, highlight its limitations, and consider how it pertains to the criminal justice system.

The work of Sigmund Freud and his followers, who believed that unresolved childhood trauma and unconscious conflicts were the primary influences on adult behaviour, forms the basis of psychodynamic theory. Conflicts between the id, ego, and superego, according to psychodynamic theory, are what lead to criminal behaviour (Andrews, 2019). The ego stands for the conscious, logical intellect that tries to arbitrate between the id and the superego, while the id represents the instinctual, primordial drives that drive conduct. The internalized moral and ethical ideals of society are represented by the superego (Gottdiener, 2021). Psychodynamic theory's fundamental premise is that criminal behaviour results from unresolved childhood problems, which show themselves as unconscious urges and desires. These conflicts could be a result of painful memories or traumatic experiences, which can result in personality disorders and other mental health problems. In addition, the psychodynamic theory places a strong emphasis on how early experiences and connections with parents and other adults shape personality and conduct (Harvey & Petrakis, 2019).

The fact that psychodynamic theory mainly relies on individual perceptions of behaviour makes it challenging to examine scientifically. Furthermore, the theory does not take into consideration how social and environmental factors affect behaviour. Finally, because it implies that people have little choice over their actions, the emphasis on the unconscious mind and early events may be perceived as being unduly deterministic (Gottdiener, 2021).

Despite these drawbacks, the psychodynamic theory has advanced our comprehension of crimbehaviourvior by emphasizing the significance of early interactions and experiences in the development of personality and behaviour. Psychodynamic theory has also affected the development of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and other psychological treatments to address unresolved childhood difficulties (Opara, et al., 2020). The idea that how people perceive and comprehend their environment has an impact on how they behave is the cornerstone of cognitive-behavioural theory (Atwood & Friedman, 2020). According to this idea, cognitive distortions and flawed thought process that results in unfavourable emotions and maladaptive behaviour cause criminal activity. Criminal behaviour can be unlearned by rewiring the brain and modifying behaviour, according to cognitive-behavioural theory, which highlights how learning and socialization impact behaviour (de Berail, et al., 2019). Cognitive-behavioural theory's central tenet is that negative thought patterns, such as cognitive distortions and self-talk, result in criminal behaviour. Negative experiences and socialization processes, such as exposure to dysfunctional peers or residing in a high-crime area, may perpetuate these thought patterns (de Berail, et al., 2019).

Additionally, according to cognitive-behavioural theory, criminal behaviour is a learned behaviour that may be unlearned by cognitive rewiring and behavioural alteration (Atwood & Friedman, 2020). The cognitive-behavioural paradigm has the drawback of not taking into account how genetic and biological elements affect behaviour. The theory may also be critiqued for being overly reductionistic because it primarily emphasizes human cognitive and behavioural processes while underestimating the role of social and environmental influences (Popov & Ustin, 2021). Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the cognitive-behavioural theory has helped us understand criminal conduct by bringing attention to the role that flawed thought processes and cognitive distortions have in determining behaviour. Numerous behavioural and mental health disorders,

including criminal behaviour, have been successfully treated with cognitive behavioural treatment and other cognitive-behavioural therapies (Clark, 2019).

The fact that psychological theories frequently concentrate on individual-level factors like personality traits and mental health rather than more comprehensive societal, monetary, and cultural issues that influence criminal conduct is one of their main weaknesses. For instance, psychological theories might ignore how discrimination, inequality, and poverty all affect criminal conduct. As a result, the ability of these ideas to guide wider-ranging and holistic approaches to crime detection and treatment may be constrained (Ward, 2019).

Psychological theories may also be faulted for assuming deterministic outcomes. These views, according to some opponents, imply that people are merely passive subjects of their environments and have little control over or capacity for changing their conduct (Guthke, 2020). This viewpoint could be in opposition to the fundamental tenets of reintegration and rehabilitation found in many criminal justice systems (Hossain, et al., 2021). Despite these drawbacks, psychological theories have had a considerable impact on how we explain criminal conduct and how to create interventions and treatment plans that work. These ideas have influenced the development of evidence-based strategies for criminal behaviour early detection, intervention, and rehabilitation by recognizing the psychological underpinnings that contribute to criminal conduct (Borsboom, et al., 2021).

Furthermore, psychological theories have emphasized the value of customized therapy and rehabilitation plans. These theories propose that, rather than employing a one-size-fits-all strategy for punishment and rehabilitation, each offender's treatment should be customized to meet their unique needs and situation (Lin, et al., 2020). This method acknowledges the complexity and diversity of the causes of criminal behaviour and the need for extensive and tailored interventions to effectively address these causes (Lin, et al., 2020). The significance of early intervention and preventative measures has also been underlined by psychological theories. These ideas have aided in informing early intervention programs that seek to prevent at-risk persons from engaging in criminal conduct by recognizing risky indicators and early warning signals of criminal behaviour (Borsboom, et al., 2021).

Psychological theories have had a considerable impact on the development of laws, procedures, and practices relating to crime in both prevention and intervention as a result of their relationship to the criminal justice system (Guthke, 2020). For instance, the criminal justice system is increasingly using psychological evaluations and treatments, particularly when it comes to treatment and rehabilitation (de Berail, et al., 2019). Psychological theories have also affected the development of policies and practices that are more effective in addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour. As an illustration, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is effective in reducing recidivism rates among offenders with mental health conditions, substance abuse problems, and other psychological underpinnings (Clark, 2019). Psychological theories have generally contributed significantly to our understanding of criminal behaviour and helped to create policies and practices linked to crime prevention and intervention. Even if these ideas have obvious flaws, they are still an important instrument in the continuous fight against crime and for social justice (Popov & Ustin, 2021).

American Juvenile Justice System

The juvenile justice system, which is a part of the criminal justice system in the United States, deals with minors who have been accused of crimes (Meng, et al., 2013; Steinberg, 2009). The juvenile justice system is in charge of safeguarding the public, holding young offenders accountable for their deeds, and rehabilitating

them to stop them from committing crimes in the future. The fundamental tenet of the juvenile justice system is to treat juvenile offenders differently from adult offenders (Dragomir & Tadros, 2020). The system is aware that because young people are still growing emotionally, mentally, and socially, they might not completely comprehend the effects of their choices. The approach, therefore, seeks to address the root problems that may have influenced the youth's criminal behaviour and to offer them chances for rehabilitation and education (Meng, et al., 2013).

The age range for those who are subject to the juvenile justice system's jurisdiction varies by state, although typically it covers those who are under the age of 18. However, in certain circumstances, people as old as 21 may be regarded as juveniles in some states (McCormick, et al., 2017). The juvenile justice system primarily consists of juvenile courts, juvenile detention facilities, and law enforcement organizations. Law enforcement organizations are in charge of looking into crimes and catching juvenile offenders. Cases are decided by juvenile courts, which also determine whether the accused is guilty or innocent. The custody and care of juvenile offenders who have been found guilty and sentenced is the responsibility of juvenile correctional facilities (Steinberg, 2017).

The juvenile justice system seeks to strike a balance between the needs of the victim, the young offender, and society. It tries to encourage young people who have engaged in illegal activities to take responsibility for their actions, get well, and grow in constructive ways (Kerig, 2019). In the juvenile justice system of the American criminal court system, psychology can be quite helpful. By offering perspective and comprehending the developmental stages of children and adolescents, psychology contributes to this field (McCormick, et al., 2017). Psychologists can aid in the creation of programs and interventions for young offenders. This entails understanding that adolescents are still undergoing physical, emotional, and cognitive development and that several influences, including family, peers, and mental health conditions, may have an impact on their behaviours and decisions (Clements-Nolle & Waddington, 2019).

Particularly, psychologists can facilitate the treatment and rehabilitation of young offenders by offering mental health care and counselling services. Addressing these concerns can assist to lower the likelihood of reoffending as many adolescents may have core psychological or emotional problems that lead to their delinquent behaviour. Similarly to this, psychologists can help with the assessment and evaluation of young criminals, including conducting psychological evaluations and assessments to ascertain their likelihood of reoffending and pinpoint any mental health issues. Then, decisions concerning suitable treatments and rehabilitation programs can be made using this information (Clements-Nolle & Waddington, 2019). All things considered, psychology may contribute significantly to the juvenile justice system by assisting in ensuring that young offenders receive the proper interventions and treatment as well as by encouraging their recovery and reintegration into society (McCormick, et al., 2017).

Psychology and Criminal Investigation

The American criminal justice system includes identifying and apprehending criminal suspects, gathering evidence, and building prosecution cases (Amemiya, et al., 2020). When conducting criminal investigations, law enforcement officers use a variety of strategies and procedures to gather information and evidence. Examples include interviewing suspects and witnesses, collecting physical evidence like DNA and fingerprints, looking at digital evidence, and social media posts, and conducting surveillance (Ribeiro & de Matos Soeiro, 2021). After the investigation, prosecutors evaluate the evidence to decide whether there is enough to charge the defendant.

Psychology is crucial to the criminal justice system and criminal investigations in America (Wolffram, 2020). This tactic is based on forensic psychology, which addresses legal problems using psychological concepts and methods. Forensic psychologists assess those who are the subject of legal proceedings, offer expert testimony in court, and support law enforcement in their inquiries (Wolffram, 2020). Their understanding of how people behave and make decisions might help determine why people commit crimes and how to prevent them. These are part of the areas where psychology has proven helpful in criminal investigations is eyewitness evidence (Canter, et al., 2021).

The accuracy and dependability of eyewitness testimony have been improved by forensic psychologists employing techniques like cognitive questioning and double-blind lineup procedures (Wolffram, 2020). Psychological research has also assisted the development of criminal profiling tools, which help law enforcement create a profile of the offender and understand their motivations and behaviour (Lloyd, et al., 2020). Psychology impacts both decisions about punishment and the design of programs for rehabilitating offenders in the criminal justice system. Psychologists examine criminals to identify behavioural or mental health issues and determine their propensity for recidivism (Lloyd, et al., 2020). This information can be utilized to develop tailored treatment programs for offenders as well as sentencing recommendations that consider each offender's individual needs. Criminal investigations and the criminal justice system in America both significantly rely on psychology (Wolffram, 2020). Additionally, psychologists are involved in the development of treatment and punishment recommendations. The observations made by forensic psychologists are crucial for both investigations and court cases.

The design of programs for offenders' rehabilitation in the criminal justice system and decisions concerning punishment are both influenced by psychology. Psychologists assess offenders to find behavioural or mental health problems and determine whether they will re-offend. By employing this data, specific treatment plans for offenders can be created, and sentencing guidelines can be created that consider each offender's particular requirements. Psychology plays a vital role in criminal investigations and the criminal justice system in America. Psychologists also contribute to the creation of treatment plans and sentencing guidelines. Forensic psychologists' insights are essential to both investigations and legal proceedings.

Mental Health and Criminal Justice

The interrelated problems of mental health and criminal justice have drawn more attention in America in recent years. According to studies (Bonfine et al., 2020; Gutierrez & Patterson, 2021), 2 million people with mental illness are booked into jails every year, which is a disproportionately high number of people with mental illness who end up in the criminal justice system. Initiatives to reduce the prison population in the United States frequently centre on the probable connection between mental illness and criminality (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). These linkages, though at best tenuous, are essential for averting imprisonment and reducing recidivism among persons who have completed their time in prison but still suffer from a mental illness. More effective mental health care is thought to be beneficial for programs designed to prevent crime. With the help of such initiatives, the criminal justice system may better ensure that the mental health of defendants and other criminal process participants is effectively addressed.

The excessive representation is due to several factors. One explanation is the difficulty people with mental illness frequently encounter while trying to receive mental health treatment because of multiple obstacles. Instead of being treated through suitable mental health therapy, this may result in their behaviour being

criminalized (Schelper, 2022). Another factor is that law enforcement officials lack the knowledge and tools necessary to recognize and assist those who are suffering from mental illness (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). When people with mental illness are involved in the criminal justice system, they frequently encounter new difficulties. Their symptoms can worsen and their risk of recidivism can rise as a result of poor mental health care, prejudice and stigma from staff and other prisoners, and insufficient therapy (Lloyd et al., 2020). The growing number of people with mental health and substance use difficulties who are involved in the criminal justice system has considerable negative effects on finances, health, and people (Sanmartin et al., 2020).

Diverting those with mental health and substance use issues away from jails and prisons and toward more suitable and culturally competent community-based mental health care is a crucial component of national, state, and local strategies to provide people with the support they need and prevent needless involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems (King & Schindler, 2021). Law enforcement personnel, public defenders, prosecutors, court personnel, advocates, and legislators must collaborate to develop a system that will improve outcomes for everyone.

According to Lum et al. (2020), this will assist people who need services, reduce involvement, and improve fairness throughout the criminal justice system. To redirect people with mental illnesses from the criminal justice system and into proper treatment, attempts have been made to address this issue through diversion programs and mental health courts (Edwards & Kotera, 2021). Experts in the field of mental health must collaborate with members of law enforcement, public defenders, prosecutors, court personnel, advocates, and legislators to develop a system that will improve outcomes for everyone. As a result, those in need of assistance will receive support, involvement will decline, and fairness in the criminal justice system will be advanced (Edwards & Kotera, 2021). These projects entail cooperation between the criminal justice system, law enforcement, and mental health professionals. In order to address the root causes of the overrepresentation of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system, the problem of mental health and criminal justice in America demands a multifaceted strategy (Lum, et al., 2020). We may work toward a more just and equitable criminal justice system for people with mental illness by introducing preventive, diversion, and treatment programs.

Rehabilitation and Reentry

In the criminal justice system, rehabilitation and readmission are two ideas that are intertwined (Todd_Kyam&Ugelvik, 2019). To lessen the possibility that offenders would commit crimes in the future, Todd_Kyam&Ugelvik (2019) define rehabilitation as the process of returning offenders to their prior condition of competence through treatment and counselling. The process of reintegrating criminals back into society after they have completed their time in prison or jail, on the other hand, is known as reentry (Todd_Kyam&Ugelvik, 2019).

Psychology has conducted a great deal of research on both rehabilitation and reentry because psychologists understand how crucial it is to treat the root reasons for criminal behaviour and give offenders the assistance they need for successful reintegration into society (Ziv, 2019). Rehab and reentry are hotly contested topics in America. While some contend that these strategies are necessary for lowering recidivism rates, others critique them as being inefficient and expensive (Chen et al., 2021). Cognitive-behavioural therapy, drug treatment programs, and vocational training are just a few of the many varied rehabilitation strategies that are available (Magill et al., 2023). These programs help offenders deal with the underlying issues that

motivated their criminal activity and acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary to prevent future offences (Lussier & Mathesius, 2019).

Despite the controversy, rehabilitation and reintegration programs are nevertheless developed and implemented in large part by psychologists (Galleguillos et al., 2023). The cognitive-behavioural treatment (CBT) program, which has been found to lower recidivism rates among offenders, is one illustration of an effective rehabilitation program (Green, 2019). The foundation of CBT is the belief that offenders can learn to recognize and alter the thought patterns and behaviours that support criminal behaviour. This method has been successful in treating a variety of mental health conditions, including substance misuse, depression, and anxiety, which are prevalent among offenders (Powell et al., 2022). Programs for reentry have also been demonstrated to be successful in lowering recidivism rates. As an illustration, the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) was established in 2003 to offer complete reentry services to criminals leaving prison and returning to society. According to a program study, participants' rates of recidivism were dramatically lowered (Lattimore & Visher, 2020).

The implementation of rehabilitation and reentry programs in America still faces difficulties despite the success of these programs. The lack of financing and resources for these initiatives is a significant problem that may have an impact on their efficacy (Lattimore & Visher, 2020; Green, 2019). Additionally, people who want tougher punishment and lengthier prison terms frequently oppose the notion of rehabilitation and readmission. In conclusion, psychologists have played a crucial role in establishing evidence-based strategies to reduce recidivism rates and promote successful reintegration into society, despite the difficulties in implementing successful rehabilitation and reentry programs in America. There is a good chance that such initiatives will keep developing and become better as more research in the field is done.

Future Directions

Various prospective directions are expected to be significant in the upcoming years as the criminal justice system in America continues to evolve. Among these include the incorporation of psychology, the emphasis on good living conditions and a stable community, expanded research, and a stronger focus on human development. The incorporation of psychological principles and research among other related fields is one of the main directions for the criminal justice system in America. Addressing the root reasons for criminal behaviour is becoming increasingly important, and psychologists can be essential in creating evidence-based interventions that can lower recidivism rates and encourage effective reintegration into society. This may entail increasing access to mental health resources, creating tailored treatment plans for criminals with particular mental health problems, and training criminal justice workers in psychological principles.

A focus on quality of life and a vibrant society is another crucial direction for the criminal justice system. This entails a change from a punitive to a prevention- and rehabilitation-focused approach to criminal justice. This can entail funding initiatives that deal with societal issues that contribute to crime, such as unemployment, poverty, and restricted access to healthcare and education, hence altering psycho-socio-derivative processes that result in criminality. The criminal justice system can contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society for all by addressing these fundamental problems.

For the future of the criminal justice system in America, a more empirical study is also essential in relation to the provision of insight, understanding and evaluation of policies-impacts. Expanding financing for studies on effective interventions for lowering recidivism rates and encouraging successful reentry, as well as studies on the social and economic factors that influence criminal conduct, maybe one way to accomplish this.

Policymakers can build evidence-based policies that are supported by scientific evidence and make better resource allocation decisions by investing in research. And lastly, a stronger focus on human development is necessary for the American criminal justice system's future. This can entail expanding the options for education and job training available to offenders as well as funding initiatives that foster social and emotional growth. The criminal justice system can aid in ending the cycle of inter-generational crime and impoverishment by placing a strong emphasis on human development, which will lead to a society that is more equitable and just for all. To sum up, several elements, such as the incorporation of psychological principles, a focus on the quality of life and a healthy society, expanded research, and a stronger emphasis on human development, are likely to impact the future of the criminal justice system in America. Together, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can overcome these obstacles and build an equitable and more equitable criminal justice system that enhances the well-being of all societal members.

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