

CRIMINOGENIC THINKING AND PERSONALITY AT INMATES FROM ROMANIA**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26758/13.1.7>**

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Abstract

Objective. The objective was to identify and analyze how criminogenic thinking and personality are involved in delinquency and crime in order to prevent criminal behavior.

Material and methods. Data were collected from 300 male inmates, with ages between 21 and 65, definitively sentenced and in custody in seven Romanian penitentiaries. An omnibus questionnaire and two psychological questionnaires were used: the Criminogenic Cognitions Scale and the CP5F Personality Questionnaire.

Results. Compared to the control group, the group of people deprived of liberty convicted of murder obtained a statistically significantly higher mean for the short-term planning subscale and lower for the extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability subscales. The variability of the score for the thinking pattern specific to short-term planning is due to 59% of the low conscientiousness score $F(148,149) = 9.32, p < .05$, and in turn the conscientiousness score is explained in proportion to 38% of the negative cognitive pattern score against authority $F(148, 149) = 5.79, p < .05$ and 33% of that of insensitivity to impact $F(148, 149) = 5.02, p < .05$. At the same time, the conscientiousness score explains 35% of the emotional stability score $F(148, 149) = 81.69, p < .01$.

Conclusions. The specialized intervention regarding social reintegration intended for this category of people requires a careful orientation towards assuming social norms, emotional balancing, adaptation in society, previewing the consequences and developing the ability to make long-term plans.

Keywords: murder, criminogenic cognition, personality traits, specific intervention.

Introduction

The situation of murders committed with intent in the last 20 years in Europe shows numerous fluctuations, a fact that determines that criminal justice and crime are topics of constant interest with the aim of developing and implementing strategic plans, regarding the reduction of these crimes.

If during the period 2008-2014, the data for murder committed with intent showed a considerable decrease, in 2015 there was a return. The total number registered in the European Union (excluding the Netherlands, the United Kingdom - England and Wales and the United Kingdom - Scotland) in 2015 was 4,528, 19.6% less than in 2008 (5,634), but with 4.3% higher than in 2014 (4,340). In 2018, there were approximately 3,993 intentional homicides recorded by the police in the European Union, which represents a 30% decrease compared to 2008. By reporting the data per 100,000 inhabitants, the highest figures were recorded in Latvia (5.2), Lithuania (3.5) and Estonia (1.9). With regard to intentional homicide, at the level of the European Union, a decrease in the average number of homicides can be observed in the period 2019-2020, compared to 2018, with the most significant decreases being recorded by countries such as the Czech Republic, Greece, Austria (Eurostat, 2018, 2020).

Also, in Romania, the situation in recent years has shown a slight decrease in terms of convictions for crimes of murder, qualified murder, especially serious murder, beatings or injuries causing death. Thus, if in 2019 the total number of final convictions for the aforementioned acts was 4,743, in 2020 were recorded 4,544 convictions and 4,519 in 2021 (Ministry of Justice, 2023). The same pattern was followed in 2022 as well, according to the information provided by the National Penitentiary Administration (2022).

The degree of social danger presented by murder is particularly high, because the deed affects the most important attribute of the person, life. The impact and consequences of a crime are always devastating, as it not only stimulates public fear but also causes pain to the victim's family (Van Gelder & De Vries, 2012). Through research on the phenomenology of the criminal act, specialized literature has identified several causal criminogenic factors, including: social environment of belonging, family climate, genetic basis, psychological characteristics (Farrington, 2020; Witt, Lichtenstein, & Fazel, 2015; Farrington, 2015; Portnoy, Chen, & Raine, 2013; Ward et al., 2010).

The study of criminology attests that personality traits are at least as important a factor as the environmental factor (Kamaluddin, Shariff, Othman, Ismail, & Saat, 2015), personality profiles becoming a very useful tool in the process of understanding and preventing criminal behavior. Personality inventories such as the Big Five model (Clark, Boccaccini, Caillouet, & Chaplin, 2007), the Eynseck three-factor model (Boduszek, Shevlin, Adamson, & Hyland, 2013) describe both the general personality traits of individuals without criminal manifestations and those with criminal behavior.

The correlation between personality and criminal behavior has been widely analyzed in the specialized literature (Eysenck, 1977; Preston, Watts, Anestis, & Lilienfeld, 2018) and there is evidence that the identification of characteristic features contributes considerably both to the identification of predispositions for criminality and to the prevention of criminal behavior (Van Gelder & De Vries, 2012). At the same time, theorists suggest that personality influences the decision-making process in committing the criminal act, so that in situations of criminal risk, depending on the personality of each person, there may be rational choices of deterrence or irrational choices of cost-benefit (Becker, 1968; Hirtenlehner, Pauwels, & Mesko, 2014).

Skeem, Winter, Kennealy, Loudon, and Tatar (2014) suggest that in addition to personality variables, criminogenic cognition is a risk factor in current criminology theory. Criminal thinking used to justify and rationalize one's behavior is often found in criminal behavior. Walters (2012) after conducting a meta-analysis on criminal thinking concluded that it is closely related to criminal identity and also influences the risk of criminal recidivism. Starting from the hypothesis that the inclusion of a measure of knowledge of criminal thinking can increase the prediction of criminal recidivism, various criminogenic cognitive styles have been identified, which can explain the individual's involvement in criminal behavior. It is about certain cognitive errors, the inability to be aware of the effects of the act, an unrealistic self-image, a poor ability to differentiate between needs and desires and a decision-making process based more on emotion than on reason (Walters, 2020).

A possible explanation in this sense can be the fact that the criminal invokes various aspects to motivate his deed, including stating that he was forced by certain unfavorable circumstances to commit it (Walters, 2002). Another explanation can be the erroneous interpretation of the surrounding situations in which the individual finds himself, most of the time considering that everything is a threat to his safety (Walters, 2020). Lipsey, Landenberger and Wilson (2007) talk about the position of victim in which the aggressor transposes himself, arguing his act through an attitude of injustice, feelings of social inequality and discrimination. Another unproductive coping strategy observed in incarcerated women who killed their husband or partner is the use of primitive and ineffective coping strategies when faced with negative situations (Saucan, Micle, Liiceanu, & Oancea, 2011).

Salakhova et al. (2016) believe that in order to understand in depth the phenomenology of the criminal act, a complex analysis is necessary, an integrative model that allows the description of criminal decisions, by identifying the mechanisms underlying them.

Therefore, an analysis of the criminogenic thinking pattern and personality traits of people convicted of murder represents an opportunity to deepen the knowledge of the phenomenon, for the purpose of prevention.

Material and methods

This is a quantitative cross-sectional study, in which information on the populations of two groups was analyzed and compared, without manipulating the variables in the study environment. The data collection was carried out between August 2021 and July 2022. The questionnaires were applied in seven penitentiary units subordinated to the National Administration of Penitentiaries in Romania, as follows: Arad Penitentiary (55 questionnaires), Bistrița Penitentiary (30 questionnaires), Botoșani Penitentiary (28 questionnaires), Craiova Penitentiary (42 questionnaires), Mărgineni Penitentiary (41 questionnaires), Ploiești Penitentiary (57 questionnaires), Vaslui Penitentiary (47 questionnaires). Considering the dynamics specific to the penitentiary environment, there were temporal intervals in which the instruments were applied at the same time, in several penitentiary units.

The enforcement activity was carried out with the help of psychologists employed at the level of penitentiary units because, taking into account the epidemiological situation, namely the measures taken at national and international level for the prevention and control of SARS-COV-2 infection in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Administration The National Board of Penitentiaries restricted the physical presence within the subordinate units. Therefore, the

necessary materials were sent in physical format and the telephone dialogue was maintained with the specialists designated for the application of questionnaires within the penitentiary units.

Participants

The data from 300 male prisoners, aged between 21 and 65 years, definitively sentenced between 1 and 35 years were used.

The 300 participants represented two distinct groups, as follows: group A consisted of 150 subjects convicted of murder (attempted murder, murder, serious murder, particularly serious murder, aggravated murder, aggravated murder alleged perpetrator, complicity to murder qualified, qualified murder and robbery, blows causing death), aged between 21 and 65 years and batch B consisting of 150 subjects convicted for acts that are not part of the category of crimes against the person (theft, complicity in fraud, smuggling, driving without a license, driving with a suspended license, driving a vehicle under the influence of alcoholic beverages, refusal to collect biological samples, crimes related to the customs regime, crimes related to the forestry regime), aged between 22 and 65 years.

Objective

The study aimed to identify and analyze how criminogenic thinking and personality are involved in the production of the crime of murder.

Hypotheses

H.1 The cognitive pattern of persons deprived of liberty convicted of murder is oriented towards obtaining immediate satisfaction.

H.2 Persons deprived of liberty convicted of murder have difficulties in assuming social norms and therefore show insensitivity to the impact of the crime.

H.3 In the case of criminals convicted of murder, there are associations between the criminogenic thought pattern and some personality traits.

Instruments

The picture of criminogenic cognitions was analyzed by means of the Criminogenic Cognitions Scale, being considered a predictor of criminal behavior. The Criminogenic Cognitions Scale [SCC] was developed following research that examined the link between moral thinking and criminal recidivism in the case of the prison population, and is made up of five subscales: notions of entitlement (When I want something, I expect people to give it to me) ; not taking responsibility (Unpleasant experiences from my childhood are partly to blame for my current situation); short-term planning (the future is unpredictable, there's no point in planning it); insensitivity to the impact of the crime (A theft is acceptable as long as the victim is not physically harmed); negative attitudes towards authority (People in positions of authority generally take advantage of others) (Tangney et al., 2012). The particularity of this instrument lies in the fact that it incorporates the theory of restorative justice, through the dimensions of insensitivity to the impact of the crime and not assuming responsibility. Completing the answers for the SCC was done on the basis of a Likert scale from 1-4, where: 1 = completely untrue as far as I am concerned; 2 = mostly untrue about me; 3 = mostly true about me; 4 = perfectly true as far as I'm concerned.

To analyze personality traits, the CP5F Personality Questionnaire was used, which evaluates the five factors of the Big Five Model - extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, kindness and autonomy. The instrument was created by Monica Albu (2008) according to the model of the FFPI (Five-Factor Personality Inventory) questionnaire (Hendriks, Hofstee, & De Raad, 1999). The CP5F questionnaire contains 130 items, grouped into six scales, with the addition of the Social Desirability scale, the answer method being on the Likert scale, where: 1 = suits me very little; 2 = suits me a little; 3 = fits me about halfway; 4 = suits me a lot; 5 = suits me very well. The use of this questionnaire was carried out exclusively for research purposes, within the doctoral training - Dimensions of personality, emotions and cognitions in persons deprived of liberty, with the consent of the author.

Through the Omnibus Questionnaire, socio-demographic data and aspects related to health status, drug and alcohol consumption were collected.

To evaluate the data from a statistical point of view, techniques were used that focused on descriptive analysis, the T-test for two independent samples, the Pearson correlation test and linear regression analysis (Popa, 2011). The calculations were performed with a specialized software, namely the program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 26.0 (Softonic, n.d.).

Ethics and consent

The present study was designed in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (2000) and the national laws in Romania regarding ethical conduct in scientific research, being authorized in this sense by the Ethics Commission of the Romanian Academy, for the conduct of studies that part of the doctoral training.

Cultural, individual and role differences were respected, including those of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socio-economic status (Regulation no. 679/2016 of the Parliament European and Council of the European Union, 2016).

All data were used anonymously, exclusively for scientific purposes, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation no. 679/2016 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (GDPR) in force from May 25, 2018, Law no. 129/2018 for the amendment and completion of Law no. 102/2005 regarding the establishment, organization and operation of the National Supervisory Authority for the Processing of Personal Data, as well as for the repeal of Law no. 677/2001 for the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data (European Commission, n.d.).

The research respected the following ethical principles:

Protecting participants - protecting the personal, social, financial, organizational status of research participants and ensuring all rights.

Promoting the well-being of the participants - it worked for the benefit of the participants, respecting the standards of professional conduct.

Promoting accuracy, honesty and truth - the data has not been and will not be used for the purpose of deception or fraud, and the facts will not be intentionally misrepresented.

Correctness and recognition of the limits of competence - the limits of competence were not exceeded and no tools or methods were used that lead to unfair practices.

Respect for the dignity and value of people, the right to privacy, confidentiality and self-determination.

Each subject gave written consent to participate by signing the *informed consent*, through which the following were presented:

- a) the purpose and objectives of the study;
- b) the estimated time period for conducting the study;
- c) description of procedures;
- d) the consequences of participating in the study;
- e) description of the risks to which it is subject or the level of discomfort that could be expected;
- f) description of possible inconveniences;
- g) description of potential benefits for the subject;
- h) information regarding the confidentiality of identity and personal data and specifying the persons who will have access to this data;
- i) the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time, without suffering repercussions.

It should be noted that, regarding batch B, there were 25 refusals to participate, without recording withdrawals during the course of the research for the two groups.

Results

According to the data analysis, drug use prior to incarceration varies by age category. If the highest consumption was recorded in the 31 - 40 years interval (16.82%), the lowest was for the 61 - 65 years category (8.57%).

In the case of the *short-term planning subscale* – the criminogenic cognitions scale, the T-test for two independent samples $t(291.35) = -3.44$, $p < .01$ revealed that group A, represented by persons deprived of liberty convicted of murder, obtained a statistically significantly higher mean score ($M = 2.21$; $SD = 0.62$) in contrast to group B represented by persons deprived of liberty who did not commit the crime of murder ($M = 1.88$; $SD = 0.54$). The results can be seen in *table 1 and table 2*.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Criminogenic Cognitions Scale Scores (N=300)

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
feelings of entitlement	A	2.391	.6789	.0554
	B	2.271	.6975	.0570
not assuming responsibility	A	1.753	.5850	.0478
	B	1.803	.6178	.0504

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
short term planning	A	2.121	.6290	.0514
	B	1.888	.5402	.0441
insensitivity to the impact of the act	A	2.295	.6540	.0534
	B	2.340	.6577	.0537
negative attitude towards authority	A	2.292	.6263	.0511
	B	2.269	.6273	.0512

Table 2

Independent Samples T-Test Results - Criminogenic Cognitions Scale

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
feelings of entitlement	Equal variances assumed	.126	.722	1.51	298	.132	.1200	.0795	-.0364	.2764
	Equal variances not assumed			1.51	297.78	.132	.1200	.0795	-.0364	.2764
not assuming responsibility	Equal variances assumed	.003	.958	-.710	298	.478	-.0493	.0695	-.1861	.0874
	Equal variances not assumed			-.710	297.11	.478	-.0493	.0695	-.1861	.0874
short term planning	Equal variances assumed	1.26	.261	3.44	298	.001	.2333	.0677	.1001	.3666
	Equal variances not assumed			3.44	291.35	.001	.2333	.0677	.1001	.3666
insensitivity to the	Equal variances assumed	.038	.846	-.599	298	.550	-.0453	.0757	-.1944	.1037

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2- tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
impact of the act	Equal variances not assumed			-.599	297.9 9	.550	-.0453	.0757	-.1944	.1037
	Equal variances assumed	.047	.829	.313	298	.754	.0227	.0724	-.1198	.1651
negative attitude towards authority	Equal variances not assumed			.313	297.9 99	.754	.0227	.0724	-.1198	.1651
	Equal variances assumed									

For the *extraversion subscales* (M =70.75, SD = 8.60; M = 73.31, SD = 12.43), $t(298) = -2.07, p < .05.$, *conscientiousness* (M = 99.99, SD = 12.92; M = 104.30, SD = 12.91)), $t(298) = -2.89, p < .05$ and *emotional stability* (M = 78.15, SD = 10.30; M = 81.91, SD = 11.61), $t(298) = -2.96, p < .05$, the T-test for independent samples revealed that inmates who had committed an act of homicide (group A) had statistically significantly lower mean scores than the control group (group B). The results can be seen in *table 3 and table 4*.

Table 3

Means and standard deviations for the CP5F Personality Questionnaire (N=300)

Scale	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
desirability	A	63.07	7.799	.637
	B	64.67	7.629	.623
extraversion	A	70.75	8.607	.703
	B	73.31	12.439	1.016
conscientiousness	A	99.99	12.925	1.055
	B	104.30	12.919	1.055
Courtesy	A	93.73	12.708	1.038
	B	96.58	13.408	1.095

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
emotional stability	A	78.15	10.302	.841
	B	81.91	11.611	.948
autonomy	A	70.91	7.785	.636
	B	72.45	10.002	.817

Table 4

Independent Samples T-Test Results - CP5F Personality Questionnaire

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
desirability	Equal variances assumed	.428	.514	-1.804	298	.072	-1.607	.891	-3.360	.146
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.804	297.856	.072	-1.607	.891	-3.360	.146
extraversion	Equal variances assumed	12.265	.001	-2.073	298	.039	-2.560	1.235	-4.991	-.129
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.073	265.069	.039	-2.560	1.235	-4.992	-.128
conscientiousness	Equal variances assumed	.001	.973	-2.891	298	.004	-4.313	1.492	-7.250	-1.377
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.891	298.000	.004	-4.313	1.492	-7.250	-1.377
courtesy	Equal variances assumed	.033	.855	-1.887	298	.060	-2.847	1.508	-5.815	.122
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.887	297.148	.060	-2.847	1.508	-5.815	.122

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
emotional stability	Equal variances assumed	3.391	.067	-2.967	298	.003	-3.760	1.267	-6.254	-1.266
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.967	293.840	.003	-3.760	1.267	-6.254	-1.266
autonomy	Equal variances assumed	7.921	.005	-1.495	298	.136	-1.547	1.035	-3.583	.490
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.495	281.070	.136	-1.547	1.035	-3.584	.490

Regarding group A (persons convicted of murder) it was observed that the score for *short-term planning* type thinking has an acceptable level of association with the *conscientiousness* score $R = .343$, and yet the value of R^2 indicates that the variability 59% of the score of the respective thinking pattern is due to the conscientiousness score $F(148,149) = 9.32, p < .05$. In turn, the score for conscientiousness is explained in proportion to 38% by the score of the negative cognitive pattern towards authority $F(148, 149) = 5.79, p < .05$ and by 33% by that of insensitivity to impact $F(148, 149) = 5.02, p < .05$. At the same time, the conscientiousness score explains 35% of the *emotional stability* score $F(148, 149) = 81.69, p < .01$. The score for emotional stability is explained in proportion of 15% by *the extraversion* score $F(148, 149) = 26.11, p < .01$. The results can be seen in *table 5*.

Table 5

Linear regression analysis scores - conscientiousness, short-term planning, negative attitude towards authority, insensitivity to the impact of the act, emotional stability and extraversion

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
conscientiousness	.343 ^a	.059	.053	.6121
negative attitude towards authority	.194 ^a	.038	.031	12.721

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
insensitivity to the impact of the act	.181 ^a	.033	.026	12.754
emotional stability	.596 ^a	.356	.351	8.298
extraversion	.387 ^a	.150	.144	9.531

Regarding the use of drugs and alcohol, no statistically significant differences were identified between the scores obtained by the two groups.

Discussions

The present study agrees with the results found by Van Gelder and De Vries (2012), who concluded that a low conscientiousness score is correlated with criminal behavior. In turn, McCrae, Costa, Del Pilar, Rolland and Parker (1998) attribute to the low level of conscientiousness an important role in committing the crime, considering that it has a major role in the management of impulses and the manifestation of self-control. The authors see conscientiousness as responsible for the tendency to think carefully before acting, to be willing to exert considerable effort to achieve a goal. Also, De Vries, De Vries, de Hoogh and Feij (2009) believe that people with a lower level of conscientiousness are disinhibited in risky situations and have a lower probability of considering potentially negative consequences.

The lower levels for conscientiousness, extraversion and emotional stability obtained in the present study on Romanian prisoners convicted of murder are also supported by Khalili et al. (2017), who in their study on three groups of people from Tehran, found that those who committed crimes show significant differences regarding personality traits, the most significant difference being recorded for the level of conscientiousness and extraversion. At the same time, the meta-analysis by the authors Feltz and Cokely (2019) provides additional evidence that the level of extraversion is closely related to judgments of free will, especially in cases of murder, this feature being important in identifying boundary conditions. Also analyzing the results obtained by 75 Indians convicted of murder, Singh (1980) concluded that they obtained higher scores for extraversion than the control group. The same result was found by Popoola, Faworaja, Oyeleke, Fagbamila and Opayemi, (2017).

Regarding emotional stability, the present study complements the information discovered by Pratt and Cullen (2000), namely that the low level of emotional stability is one of the strongest correlates of crime. Similar conclusions were also identified by Malouf et al. (2014) in a number of 48 empirical studies that examined the link between the level of emotional stability and criminal behavior. Furthermore, Heatherton and Tice (1994) asserted that people vary in their willingness and ability to exercise self-control and that these individual differences have implications for many aspects of emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment. Likewise, Hirschi and Gottfredson (1990) believe that lack of self-control is key to understanding and predicting many behavioral problems, including serious antisocial behavior.

From the point of view of the short-term planning thinking pattern, it is considered a characteristic of people convicted of murder, including by Pratt and Cullen (2000). They see it as a consequence of the low level of emotional stability. The individual does not have the necessary patience to wait to satisfy his own needs, therefore he does not make plans that require waiting. Criminogenic cognition is also supported by Boduszek and Hyland (2012), who point out that one of the most important characteristics that can explain criminal behavior is criminal thinking, because it drives the whole system, which includes attitudes and beliefs, and uses it exclusively to rationalize and justify criminal behavior.

However, Megargee (1984) in one of the most cited studies on a group of people deprived of liberty found that a large proportion of convicted people have normal psychological profiles. At the same time, the authors believe that it is not always useful to differentiate between groups of people who have committed acts of violence and those who have not, or depending on the victim, in the case of sexual abuse.

Therefore, more studies are needed to clarify the psychological profile of criminals because not all convicted persons present specific pathology, the criminological picture being much more complex. Balica (2008) emphasized in this regard the importance of taking into account both macro-social factors, as well as micro-social and individual ones, thus emphasizing the potential impact of the family environment, the group of friends, the work group, the state of health.

Therefore, "researchers are more and more interested in addressing topics that are part of a macro-criminological perspective, a perspective that tries to relate the criminal act to factors that manifest themselves at the level of society" (Balica, 2008, p. 61).

According to the results of the present study, from a psychological point of view committing a murder is a process that in certain situations could be explained as follows:

- 1) *the person seeks immediate gratification and does not have the ability to foresee the possible consequences;*
- 2) *the person is emotionally vulnerable, loses control in stressful situations, therefore, to obtain satisfaction, she may kill the victim, even if she did not initially plan this aspect;*
- 3) *the crime may represent an act of impulse at the moment or of experiencing a psychological state obtained only through the crime;*
- 4) *due to the fact that he fails to understand the usefulness and social character of the norms and rules imposed by society, he does not show remorse when he breaks a rule, commits a crime;*
- 5) *shows regret for the situation in which he is, because not having the ability to plan in the long term, he did not think about these consequences, but he has no remorse for the victim.*

At the same time, the results indicate that there are also situations where, at a cognitive level, the criminal does not set his goal to take the life of another person, but to get what he wants from that person – a material good, sexual relations, a psychological state etc., in a very short time and with certainty, without having the ability to preview, to think about the consequences of the act. In this context, murder becomes a result of the situation in which the person satisfies a need, against the background of a reduced level of emotional control. This perspective may explain the many statements like "I didn't mean to do that" "If she hadn't said she was reporting me I wouldn't have killed her" "If she hadn't screamed, I wouldn't have killed her. I just wanted to have sexual relations with her" (according to field experience - psychological assistance provided to persons deprived of liberty).

Conclusions

All three hypotheses of the study were confirmed.

It is obvious that criminal thinking is negative, considering the impact it has on a social, moral and psychological level. However, according to the results of the present study on inmates from Romania, convicted of murder, from the point of view of criminogenic thinking, the only statistically significant difference between the scores obtained on the two lots was recorded on the short-term planning subscale. This aspect reveals that among the psychological peculiarities of these people is *the guidance of behavior to obtain immediate satisfaction*.

Regarding the second hypothesis - persons deprived of liberty convicted of murder have difficulties in assuming social norms and therefore show insensitivity to the impact of the crime, statistically significantly lower scores for extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability indicate that they have a tendency to spend time alone rather than in the company of other people, difficulties in learning social norms, as well as in controlling one's emotions and inner states. The association of the low conscientiousness score with the negative attitude towards authority supports pathological rebellious behavior, thus, due to the fact that *the individual has a negative attitude towards authority, he does not acquire pro-social values. Insensitivity to the impact of crime becomes a consequence of this process of not assuming socially accepted values, therefore, in the absence of moral dilemmas, social norms can be completely ignored at the personality level*.

For the third hypothesis - *in the case of criminals convicted of murder there are associations between the criminogenic thinking pattern and personality traits*, the correlation between the low level of conscientiousness and short-term planning describes the fact that the person in question starts the actions without he thinks about what they are for and how they will end, therefore he does not have the ability to think about the consequences of the act.

Considering that no statistically significant differences were identified between the scores of the two groups regarding drug and alcohol consumption, although many crimes were committed on the background of *alcohol or drug consumption, it can be appreciated that this is not a determining factor in committing a murder, but rather a factor that allows the manifestation of certain personality traits and thought patterns, which until then were not expressed at the behavioral level*.

In the light of the above, specialized intervention in the case of persons deprived of liberty convicted of murder requires a careful orientation towards the assumption of social norms, emotional balancing, adaptation in society, previewing the consequences and developing the ability to make long-term plans.

Limits

Even if all the legal measures imposed by the National Administration of Penitentiaries regarding the conduct of scientific research in the penitentiary environment were respected, the method of application is one of the limits of this, because the training of the participants could not be carried out by the researcher. The tools were applied exclusively by the staff assigned within the penitentiary units.

Another limitation is represented by the significance that the participants gave to the institutional context in which the tools were applied and therefore providing desirable responses.

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