Criminal Narratives of Mentally Disordered Offenders

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http://www2.hud.ac.uk/hhs/ircip/msc_ip.php
Overview

- Background
  - Criminal Narratives
  - Mentally Disordered Offenders (MDO)

- Aims

- Method

- Analysis

- Results

- Benefits

- Future Direction
Background – Criminal Narratives

- Canter (1994)
- Canter, Youngs, Ioannou, (2009)
  - 4 Criminal Narratives
  - The Victim (Ironic)
  - The Professional (Adventure/romance)
  - The Hero (Quest)
  - The Revenger (Tragedy)
- Youngs and Canter (2011)
- Canter and Youngs (2012)
The vast majority of research suggests that there is an association between mental illness and crime.

MDOs are a distinct population of offenders.

Despite the specific risks MDOs pose there has been no research into how MDOs understand their criminal actions.
Aims

• To investigate whether similar narratives as identified in prior research (e.g., Canter et al., 2003; Canter, Youngs & Ioannou, 2009) would be replicated within a MDO population.

• To explore whether certain diagnoses would be associated with certain narratives
70 adult male offenders

Convicted of a sexual, violent or acquisitive offence

Diagnosed with either Axis I, Axis II or No formal diagnosis

Placed at either a Forensic Medium Secure Unit or community forensic residential hostel

Focused on index offence to answer questions in the study

Narrative Role Questionnaire (Canter, Youngs, Ioannou, 2009)
Narrative Role Questionnaire

Coefficient of Alienation: .22451
Results

- **Victim**
  - Offender is confused and feels powerless
  - Believes they are the main victim
  - Lack of understanding and comprehension of their situation leads to their offending
  - Significantly more likely to have an Axis 1 diagnosis

- **Professional**
  - Sees their offending as routine and a usual day
  - Actions are rooted in control and mastery of environment
  - Endorses criminal values therefore see crimes as a lifestyle
  - Most likely related to offenders with no formal diagnosis (PD traits) – lack of emotional element
Results

- **Hero**
  - Justify actions by seeing them as a mission or adventure
  - Actions are driven by the need for recognition and power
  - Behaviour is conditioned through positive reinforcement
  - Most likely to be associated with offenders without mental health problems.

- **Revenger**
  - Offender retaliates by seeking revenge
  - Offender is reckless in their attempt for revenge as nothing else matters
  - Most likely associated with Axis II diagnoses
Benefits

- **Theoretical contributions**
  - Indications that MDOs show awareness into their experiences of crime and are able to illustrate this criminal experience in a coherent manner.
  - Elaborates on the various forms of justifications and neutralizations that are often embedded within MDOs offence accounts.

- **Therapeutic contributions**
  - Extends current treatment methods (e.g., CBT, Good Lives Model)
Future Direction

- Further research on forensic psychiatric populations to establish present findings
  - Larger and more detailed population

- Develop therapeutic implications

- Development of an offenders criminal narrative