

ABSTRACT

THE CREATION AND VALIDATION OF A MEASURE OF SELF-PERCEIVED CRIMINALITY

The motivation of human behavior has been at the forefront of inquisition across all portions of history. Motivation occurs first in the mind of the actor, consciously or otherwise, and is then translated into behavior. Crime is such a behavior whose motivation has aroused consistent curiosity. We can speculate on what motivates crime, but what do those engaged in crime think? The purpose of this research was to create and validate a measure that could detect the way a person thinks about crime. In two phases, university students at California State University, Fresno offered evidence of self-perceived criminality as well as validation evidence of measuring it using questionnaire methodology. The results indicate that self-perceived criminality does exist and is measurable. The validation of the instrument applied accepted statistical analyses of such measures as well as comparison to researched criminological theory through the lens of self-perception.

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August 2006