

# Comparing defense mechanism among prisoners in sanandaj central prison and normal people

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the current study was comparing defense mechanisms among prisoners in the central prison of sanandaj with normal people. the design of the present study In terms of purpose was practical and terms of research design was causal-comparative methods. the study population for the prisoners, all people detained in the central prison of Sanandaj and among ordinary people, ordinary people of Sanandaj in the second half of the year was 2016. The sample consisted of 90 people (45 normal, 45 prisoners). the practices were selected. Research instruments were the Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40),. Data were analyzed using SPSS software,with using T test and multivariate variance analysis. The results showed that there are difference between lifestyle of prisoner and defense mechanisms of prisoners and ordinary people also there are significant differences between responsibility in prisoner and normal people. It can be concluded from the findings that defense mechanisms of important factors that affect individuals' lives ahead.

**Keyword:** defense mechanisms, prisoner, normal people

## Introduction

Undoubtedly, after the social issues and complexities, the current century can be called the century of personal and social relationship crisis. By gradual development of societies and their industrialization, interpersonal relationships are turning from traditional to the mechanical form. Meanwhile, human relationship faced with so many complexities which in turn made some negative and social consequences. If humans' needs and desires were easily satisfied, life would have been easier. But, as we know, various problems and obstacles, especially in the prisons, prevent the satisfaction of human's needs. As a result, failure will happen. Removing some of these obstacles is easy and some are difficult and makes mental challenge; therefore, life of people in prison is a perpetual and eternal combat. The combat is essentially over the conflict or tension between individual desires and his external needs that influence the person strongly (Taghizadegan, 2012). The more the risk factors are in the person's life, the higher the probability of tendency toward the crime is. In the last 50 years, many attempts have been done to investigate the relationship between people's trend toward crime and personality structures. (PurMohammad, Yaghubi, Yusofi, Mohammad zadeh, Najafi, 2013).

Crime as a violation of criminal law is an action that is not confirmed by most of people of society; it is prosecuted and entails one of the penalties specified by law. (Williams, 1955). In our culture, instances of deviations such as theft, prostitution, murder, addiction, etc. are like deviance and crime. They are different causes that appeared in different historical periods according to the nature of structures, organizations and institutions and circumstances of time and place (Rahmani, 2011). Role of psychology in crime determination was highlighted when criminals were considered not only from judicial angle, but also from human perspective. Instead of judging crime as a separated action, they investigated all the personality and accepted the fact that full investigation of human, delinquent and non-delinquent, is possible just with deep review of his personality. (Dadsetan, 2010).

Defensive mechanisms which are formed in childhood make the personality patterns of the person in adulthood. Functions of defensive mechanisms include: self and conscious mind protection, anxiety, resentment, pain, anger, sadness, frustration and stress reduction. They help to better reconcile and

compliance with the conditions and the surroundings and cope with reality. And given that personality patterns are affected by personality development orientation, the researchers have emphasized on the formation and usage of defensive mechanisms very much. Defensive mechanisms often act collectively and are rarely used solitarily. If they cannot prepare a mental balance for the person, the relation between the person and society will collapse and there will be behavioral disorder. People suffering from mental and behavioral deviations will apply defensive mechanisms which are immature and damaging (Gholamizade Behbahani, 2012). What prepares the ground for mental deviations and disorders is the person's life style and his inability to face with the problems of life. (Dadsetan, 2010).

As criminals and captives constitute a part of society, and the attitude of society towards them show pessimism, hatred and fear; so understanding the psychological defective structures could be important in the adoption and rehabilitation of them. The present study aims to answer the following question: is there a difference between defensive mechanisms of prisoners and ordinary people?

## **materials and methods**

The present study method, of terms of purpose, function and of terms of manner of implementation, causal-comparative.

The population of the present study was the prisoned captives in central prison of Sanandaj city in 2015. Samples were selected by convenience sampling and random assignment. Then, defensive styles questionnaire (DSQ-40) was given to them (45 prisoners and 45 ordinary people). The measures for the study were their imprisonment, the least literate, their verdict being clear and their tendency to take part in the research. Those prisoners lacking these measures were excluded from the study.

In the study, the demographic characteristics of people were collected through interview and information forms. To determine the defensive styles, defensive styles questionnaire (DSQ-40) was used.

The questionnaire was developed by Andros et al in 1993 which includes 40 questions. 20 mechanisms were evaluated at three levels of developed, neurotic and immature in this questionnaire. Scoring scale was Likert scale in which each person declares his agreement to each question in a 9 degree scale. The person gets a score between 2 to 18 for each defensive mechanism. If the person's score is higher than 10 in each of the defensive mechanisms, it means the person is using it. In general styles, average scores of individual will be specified in each style and will be compared with the individual's average in other styles. The person who has the highest average has a defensive style. Defensive style questionnaire DSQ-40 is evaluated and normalized by Heidari nasab (2006) in Iran. After the questionnaire was translated to Persian and literary deficiencies were corrected, the general standardization process was pursued in two parts of reliability and validity. Reliability of defensive styles questionnaire is done through retest and Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficient of alpha in the groups has been showed by the segregation of school students, university students and sampling group gender as well as sampling defensive style. The highest total alpha was observed among the male university students (0/81) and the lowest was observed among female school students (0/69). In addition, Besharat et al (2001) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the developed, neurotic and immature styles as 0/75, 0/73, and 0/74 respectively. They also reported retest reliability coefficient as 0/82 with a 4 week interval. According to this finding, it was found that the defensive style questionnaire has an appropriate reliability in the under study groups.

For the present study conduction, it was coordinated with the Sanandaj central prison. As the information about prisoners including number, gender, age, type of condemnation etc. is confidential, it was not accessible for legal and security reasons; prior to conducting the study, the prison officials were talked about the purpose of the study and how the participants are to answer the questions. The prison officials selected some prisoners that meet the criteria of this study as available samples. The questionnaires were distributed among them. After sampling and testing the prisoners' samples with regard to the demographic characteristics of them, in order to sample the comparison group, those ordinary people who had the same age and education level as prisoners and had no criminal record responded the questions. In data analysis, it is determined that as some of the prisoners responded to the questions incompletely, therefore, they were not reliable. Out of 65 questionnaires handed to prisoners, 45 of them were responded correctly and analysis was performed on them.

## **data analysis method**

To analyze data, descriptive statistical indexes including mean and standard deviation were used. In order to review the study questions, multivariate variance analysis was applied.

## Findings

Table 1 represents the mean and SD of both prisoner and ordinary groups in variable dimensions of defensive styles.

table 1: Descriptive indicators defensive style in normal groups and prisoners

variable	Normal groups (N=45)			Prisoner groups (N=45)	
	dimension	Mean	standard deviation	Mean	standard deviation
defense mechanism	immature	126.87	28.10	119.444	26.64
	developed	44.31	10.96	42.84	9.64
	neurotic	50.53	12.28	44.18	10.7

To review this question, multivariate variance analysis testing was used. Prior to testing, the test assumptions have been discussed.

table 2: test results confirming Manova Variance analysis

test	amount	F	Hypothesis Df	Error Df	Sig
Pillais Trace	0.078	2.44	3	86	0.047
Wilks Lambda	0.922	2.44	3	86	0.047
Hotellings Trace	0.085	2.44	3	86	0.047
Roys Largest Root	0.085	2.44	3	86	0.047

The results of table 2 represent that the calculated values of F are significant at the level of 0/05. Therefore, there is a significant difference at least between one pair. In addition, in order to check assumption of homogeneity of variance - covariance matrices, M.Box testing has been performed. Its results are shown in table 3.

table 3: test results M.box

Box's M	F	Df1	Df2	Sig
3.692	0.593	6	56107.472	0.737

Table 3 results represent that assumption of homogeneity of variance - covariance matrices is respected. One of the other assumptions is the assumption of homogeneity of variances. To check this assumption, Levene's test is applied. The results are represented in table 4.

table 4: Levine test

variable	F	Df1	Df2	Sig
immature	0.058	1	88	0.810
developed	0.180	1	88	0.673
neurotic	1.088	1	88	0.300

The results of table 4 showed that all the variables have enjoyed the homogeneity of variances. Therefore, using Manova test is permissible.

table 5: Summary of multivariate data analysis

Source of Changes	Scale	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig	Eta
Group	immature	1239.511	1	1239.511	1.653	0.202	0.018
	developed	48.4	1	48.4	0.454	0.502	0.005
	neurotic	908.844	1	908.844	6.852	0.010	0.072
Error	immature	65976.311	88	749.731			
	developed	9379.556	88	106.586			
	neurotic	11671.778	88	132.634			

	immature	1432272	90
Total	developed	180340	90
	neurotic	214410	90

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The results of table 5 show that the calculated value of F in the component of neurotic defensive style is significant at the level of ( $p \leq 0/01$ ). In the other word, just in the component of neurotic defensive style a significant relation has been observed between prisoned and ordinary people. It means that the average score of neurotic defensive style for prisoners is higher than the average score of ordinary people.

### Discussion and conclusion

To review the question of whether there is a difference between defensive mechanisms of prisoners and ordinary people, the results show that among defensive styles, there is a significant difference between prisoners and ordinary people just in the component of neurotic defensive style. It means that the average score of neurotic defensive style for prisoners is higher than the average score of ordinary people.

The results of this question are compatible with the conducted studies of some researchers like Nigel and Aigle, (2006), Bulik et al (1997), Oren, (2012), Brody and Carson (2012), Gary Pespong, (2010), Taghi zadegan, (2012), Gholami zadeh Behbahani, (2012).

Violent (1992) believes that defensive mechanisms act automatically to reduce cognitive inconsistency and minimize sudden changes of internal and external reality through effecting on perceptions of threatening events; when emotional and cognitive information are not well understood in the process of study, perception and evaluation, the emotions and cognition structures of person will not have an optimized performance. As a result, the possibility of using neurotic and immature mechanisms will increase in stressful situations. The results of the current study showed that the prisoners make use of neurotic defensive mechanisms more. In these mechanisms, the person experiences a fundamental change without considering the impulses. Instead of logical and pro-social expression they use self-censorship. In long terms, this issue will couple the individual's mental structure with neurotic states. Defensive mechanisms might have a significant role in pathology and the formation of various psychiatric disorders. According to the theories of psychoanalysis, every mental pathology that includes crime commitment is determined by using special maladaptive defensive mechanisms. Neurotic defensive styles prevent their cohesion protection by extreme distortion. Criminals are less able than others to control their impulses. They can cope with stress far weaker than others. As a result, when they face with problems, instead of finding a solution to adjust their emotional states and reduce the perceived tension, they might use neurotic mechanisms.

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