

Gender Differences in Post-Offence Behavior in a Hungarian Sample of Homicide Offenders

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1. Introduction

„Men are from Mars, women are from Venus” – is it true in a rather special area of human experience like homicide? Gender differences in violent crime and specially in homicide is an important and interesting area of research. Yet, in the literature of the subject most often almost conventional findings are found. In our study we attempt to take a step further and investigate gender differences in a rather underexplored subject.

In perpetration of homicide males are overrepresented, solely a small amount (10%) of these crimes are committed by females according to Finnish and USA data (Fox & Allen, 2013; Malmquist, 2006; Rózsa, 2013; Häkkänen-Nyholm et al., 2009). This concurs with the data of the Hungarian prison service: in April 2015 1262 convicts where in custody for homicide, 116 (9,2%) of which were female and 1146 (90,8%) were male¹. The higher proportion of male offenders is often explained with the higher level of aggression in males in general (Fox & Allen, 2013). Besides that the male proprietariness theory argues that males' sense of entitlement, power, and control drives their aggression towards heteroaggressive directions (Fox & Allen, 2013).

Gender role models suggest that each group kills in ways that are reflective of socially approved gender role behavior (Jurik & Winn, 1990). It is due to diverse patterns of socialization influences, e.g., attitude towards aggression, different position in the family and in the social context (Putkonen, Weizmann-Henelius, Lindberg, Rovamo, & Hakkanen-Nyholm, 2011; Rózsa, 2013; Jurik & Winn, 1990). For example, traditional feminine role is related to a tendency to internalization, overcontrolled personality and a socially conform attitude, where aggressive episodes may occur periodically and in extreme form. According to Ogle Maier-Katkin and Bernard (1995) this pattern is exactly what is found when studying female homicide. On the other hand heteroaggression or being violent is culturally more approved in males, in some cases it is even necessary for building a masculine image (Ogle, Maier-Katkin & Bernard, 1995).

From these differences a different pattern of stress factors and tolerance, and coping techniques can be examined as well, how males and females typically tend to deal with negative affect (Ogle et al., 1995). Several studies demonstrated that females are more sensitive and more reactive to stress in general and are more sensitive to

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problems in their relationships, while males are more vulnerable to problems in the work area (Ogle et al., 1995). In contrast to traditional gender role theories Szabó Szántó, Balog and Kopp (2010) found on Hungarian samples no substantive, only subtle gender differences in coping preferences. No differences were found in preferences of problem focused or emotion focused coping. Females tend to use social support and passive and avoidant coping strategies, e.g., taking sedatives or praying more often than males, while males tend to use pressure reduction and cognitive restructuring more often (Szabó, Szántó, Balog & Kopp, 2010).

In contrast to the gender role model (Szabó et al., 2010) the liberation models suggests that violent and homicidal behavior of males and females tend to be increasingly similar. However, findings are vague regarding this issue, little evidence (Jurik & Winn, 1990) and experience (Smith & Brewer, 1992) shows that female homicidal behavior – similarly to male homicidal behavior - is increasingly related to personality characteristics, substance abuse and prior criminal activity of the offenders (Häkkinen-Nyholm et al., 2009).

Regarding gender differences in particular offence characteristics previous studies have investigated mostly situational precursors of the crime and relationship between the offender and the victim. Females more frequently kill intimates and kill in situations in which their victim initiated the physical aggression (Jurik & Winn, 1990). Killing of own child and killing an abusive spouse are almost female specialty. In a Hungarian sample 60% of females killed their own child, 35% killed their husband, and the rest of them were accomplice to a man in a homicide (Rózsa, 2013). In terms of weapon choice in intimate homicides firearm is the most frequent choice, but if not using a gun males tend to use physical force while females tend to use knives or other kitchen instruments (Fox & Allen, 2013).

Even less evidence was found about the gender differences in post-offence reactions. Results of Hakkanen-Nyholm et al. (2009) demonstrated that hiding the body, or bagging the body was equally rare between the two genders. Females stayed on the scene, notified someone, denied the crime, and regretted the deed more frequently. Putkonen et al. (2011) studied males and females perpetrated filicide and included post-offence reactions. They found that mothers cleaned up and tried to hide the body more often than fathers. There were no significant gender differences in post-offence variables, e.g., doing nothing, going to bed, putting victim into bed, lying about how the victim died, trying to hurt himself/herself, committing suicide. Other studies (Swatt & He, 2006; Rózsa, 2013) found that in general males commit posthomicide suicide more frequently than females.

2. Aim of the study

Based on the previous studies that state males and females kill in a manner reflective of their gender roles, gender differences are expected to appear in post-offence reactions and coping as well. On the other hand, we can assume that these perpetrators do not meet traditional gender roles, or the post-offence phase is so specific situation psychologically that it might alter traditional gender differences.

Detailed information about the post-offence experiences of perpetrators could be used as an aid in offender profiling, and building investigative strategies based on the offenders posthomicidal behavior. Useful information for treatment purposes could

result in identifying post-offence related factors associated with gender of the offender (Häkkinen-Nyholm et al., 2009)

The present study aims to extend the current knowledge of homicidal behavior, and to examine gender differences of the posthomicidal reactions by the offender. Our aim is to explore the post-offence reactions in male and female offenders and investigate the gender differences and similarities in this area.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 129 subjects, 18 female and 111 male perpetrators, all convicted and incarcerated for homicide. Participation in the study was voluntary, all participants gave informed consent. Individuals with acute psychosis or illiteration were excluded from the sample.

Three Hungarian high-security correctional institutions were involved into the present investigation as in Hungary these three institutions executes the majority of sentences for homicide. Descriptive data of the sample (Table 1) showed that 8 (9,8%) of male and 4 (22,2%) of female perpetrator had less than primary school education, 40 (48,8%) of male and 8 (44,4%) of female perpetrators had primary school education, 22 (26,8%) of male and 3 (16,7%) of female perpetrators had profession without high-school education, 11 (13,4%) of male and 3 (16,7%) of female perpetrators had secondary school education, and 1 (1,2%) of male and 0 of female perpetrators had university or college education. Gender differences of education were not significant (X^2 (N=100) =2,910; $p>0,5$) (Table 1).

Descriptive data of the sample (Table 1) also showed that 40 (46,5%) of male and 2 (11,1%) of female perpetrators were single, 39 (45,3%) of male and 12 (66,7%) of female perpetrators were married or lived in common-law marriage, 3 (3,5%) of male, and 1 (5,6%) of female perpetrators were in non-marital relationship, and 4 (4,7%) of male and 3 (16,7%) of female perpetrators were divorced at the time of perpetration. These data show a significantly (X^2 (N=104) =9,356; $p<0,05$) different pattern of relationship-status of male and female offenders with females more often being in some kind of relationship. These data supports the previous findings about female tendency to commit their violent crimes in a domestic context.

Data of the sample (Table 1) showed that 16 (18,6%) of male and 4 (22,2%) of female offenders lived in the capital, 17 (19,8%) of male and 7 (38,9%) of female perpetrators lived in county centre, 25 (29,1%) of male and 2 (11,1%) of female offenders lived in a town, 28 (32,6%) of male and 5 (27,8%) of female offenders lived in a village at the time of the perpetration. Gender differences of residence were not significant (X^2 (N=104) =4,416; $p>0,05$).

Table 3 shows that average age at the perpetration was 28.67 years and 30.83 years for female offenders. Independent sample t-test showed no significant difference in this regard ($p>0,05$).

3.2 Measurement

For the assessment of general proneness to anxiety and state anxiety after the perpetration of the crime the *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)* was used (Sipos, Sipos

& Spielberger, 1988). STAI scales consist of 20 items, respectively. Items are measured on four-point Likert scale. We applied the State scale with modified instructions changing the aimed time-frame from *previous week* to *time period after the perpetration of the crime*². Though STAI is a widely used and accepted as a reliable instrument (Sipos et al., 1988) in this sample reliability measures of the Trait test was weak (Cronbach α =0,327) and of the post-offence State scale was excellent (Cronbach α =0,929) (Table 3).

To measure preferences in coping strategies the *Coping Preferences Questionnaire (CPQ)* was used (Oláh, 1986). The test consists of 80 items measuring coping preferences in anxiety-provoking situations. Items are measured on a four-point Likert scale and fit to 8 scales. This tool was applied with and altered instruction: once general time-frame to the time after the perpetration of the crime, and twice investigating coping in relation of the perpetration of the crime. Reliability of the scales showed acceptable values in the present sample, for example Cronbach's alpha (Table 3).

The first scale of the CPQ is *Problem-centric reaction* (Cronbach α =0,824), where the goal of the individual is to change the situation and prevent the threat. The scale of *Social support seeking* (Cronbach α =0,820) refers to a coping strategy where the individual tries to change the situation and prevent the threat as well but requires cooperation in the process. The next scale is *Pressure control* (Cronbach α =0,800) which refers to efforts the individual makes to stabilize his personality while not giving up the possibility of changing the situation. During this process the focus is shifted from the external threat to the self. The fourth scale is *Distraction* (Cronbach α =0,744) as a protective strategy the individual steps out of the situation and procrastinates the intervention. *Emotion focus* (Cronbach α =0,524) is the strategy where the efforts of the individual are solely aimed at shaking off the negative emotions caused by the stressful situation. The *Emotion discharge* scale (Cronbach α =0,678) shows a coping strategy where the individual discharges the pressure caused by the threatening situation through uncontrolled and aimless reactions and acting-out, anger out behaviours. *Self-punishment* (Cronbach α =0,747) shows a tendency of the individual to interpret the negative situations as justified responses to his or her mistakes and undesirable behaviour. The *Deference* (Cronbach α =0,585) shows a tendency where the individual uses external locus of control and tries to accept the negative situation without making efforts to change it (Oláh, 1986). Due to that the scales consists of different number of items to compare the real preference of coping strategies value of the scale is divided with the number of items.

To measure post-crime feeling we used a list of 14 emotions: sadness, shame, guilt, satisfaction, fear, happiness, calmness and reflectiveness, feeling in secure, tiredness, numbness, self confidence, feeling like nothing happened, paranoia, loneliness. Participants evaluated emotions after and in relation to the homicide on a three-point Likert scale³.

Furthermore, homicide behaviors were investigated, particularly post-offence variables⁴ were identified in the casefiles. These variables were dichotomous and were recorded as being present (1) or absent (0) for each case. Canter and Heritage (1990)

²Due to the great variance in experiences we defined this time frame this broadly.

³ For variables of offense related and post-offence emotions coding was the following: 0 = not at all; 1 = yes; 2 = very much

⁴ Post-crime behavior is the last phase of murder, which occurs when the crime has been committed and the body has been disposed. It includes immediate responses after the crime and subsequent responses after the initial phase. (Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1992)

demonstrated this method to be useful and that content analysis any more specific than presence and absence dichotomy was likely to be unreliable when information was retrieved from police or jury records. These variables were the followings: returning to the scene; following the news in the media; getting rid of the evidence; planning or executing another homicide; being on the run; spending extraordinary; going to pubs, consuming alcohol or drugs; attempting to give up himself/herself; moving away; telling somebody about the crime; calling an ambulance; going to shopping; incriminating someone else; telling a false story as confession; going to see an attorney; killing again in a short time (6 months); traveling abroad; mixing socially with others; washing up or changing cloths; roaming by car or foot; orientating about state of investigation; increasing alcohol consummation.

4. Proposed analysis

SPSS 17.0 software was used for the statistical analysis.

After analyzing the sample's descriptive statistics we conducted independent sample t-tests to compare the post-offence emotions, behaviors and coping mechanisms of males and females for STAI Post-offensive State and CPQ scales, crime related emotions, post-offence behaviors based on casefiles.

5. Results

5.1. STAI Trait, Post offensive state anxiety and Coping

Average level of trait-anxiety of the present sample ($M=44.4$; $SD=3.2$) fits the average range of trait-anxiety for the Hungarian population ($M_{male}=40.96$; $SD_{male}=7.8$; $M_{female}=45.37$; $SD_{female}=7.8$). This mean value even fits the average for the subsample of subjects with antisocial personality disorder in a previous Hungarian study ($M=41.4$; $SD=6.3$) (Sipos et al., 1988).

Mean post-offensive state-anxiety ($M=64.30$; $SD=12.0$) in the present sample scored much higher than the average range for the general Hungarian population ($M_{male}=38.47$; $SD_{male}=10.66$; $M_{female}=42.64$; $SD_{female}=10.79$). These results suggest that though homicide perpetrators are not significantly more prone to anxiety than normal or average antisocial subjects. The anxiety experienced after the homicidal act might be more variant but rather high among these individuals.

Coping preferences were examined post-offence phase. For comparison scale values were used. Self-punishment ($M=2,90$; $SD=0,7$), Problem centric reaction ($M=2,52$; $SD=0,6$), Deference ($M=2,41$; $SD=0,8$) coping mechanisms achieved high scores, therefore were the most commonly used by perpetrators. While Social support seeking ($M=1,84$; $SD=0,7$), Emotion discharge ($M=1,86$; $SD=0,5$), Emotion focus ($M=2,16$; $SD=0,6$) were the least preferred coping mechanisms in the post-offence phase. Pressure control ($M=2,36$; $SD=0,5$) and Distraction ($M=2,24$; $SD=0,5$) were in the middle.

5.2. Post-offence emotions by gender

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare the post-offence emotions. The following crime-related feeling variables were tested: sadness, shame, guilt,

satisfaction, fear, happiness, calmness and reflectiveness, feeling in secure, tiredness, numbness, self confidence, feeling like nothing happened, paranoia, loneliness (Table 3). There were no significant gender differences in reported levels of shame, guilt, fear and anxiety, calmness, tiredness, numbness, paranoia and loneliness.

Gender differences showed that females reported sadness significantly more often (Mmale=1,12; Mfemale=1,31; $p<0,05$; $t=-0.93$), and males felt significantly more satisfied (Mmale=0,12; Mfemale=0,00; $p\leq 0.01$; $t=1,21$), happy (Mmale=0,11; Mfemale=0,00; $p\leq 0.01$; $t=1,15$), secure (Mmale=0,25; Mfemale=0,06; $p<0.01$; $t=1.57$), confident (Mmale=0,34; Mfemale=0,07; $p<0.01$; $t=1.86$), and like nothing happened (Mmale=0,28; Mfemale=0,13; $p<0.05$; $t=10.3$). These findings indicate a more intense and more often positive posthomicidal emotional experience among males. While females experience sadness more often, that is, negative feeling is more characteristic for females.

5.3. Post-offence anxiety and coping preferences by gender

We employed independent sample t-tests to compare the post-offence anxiety and coping for STAI Post-offensive State scale and CPQ scales (Table 3). No significant gender differences were found in the coping scales, however, post-offence anxiety showed significant differences. Post offence anxiety achieved significantly higher level among females than males (Mmale=63,31; Mfemale=70,47; $p<0.05$; $t=-2.32$). Therefore we may emphasize posthomicidal state as more negative and stressful for females.

5.4. Post-offence behaviors by gender

Post-offence behaviors were compared by using independent sample t-tests based on casefile information for the following variables⁵: returning to the scene; following the news in the media; getting rid of the evidence; planning or executing another homicide; being on the run; spending extraordinary; going to pubs, consuming alcohol or drugs; attempting to give up himself/herself; moving away; telling somebody about the crime; calling an ambulance; going to shopping; incriminating someone else; telling a false story as confession; going to see an attorney; killing again in a short time (6 months); traveling abroad; mixing socially with others; washing up or changing cloths; roaming by car or foot; orientating about state of investigation; increasing alcohol consummation (Table 3).

No significant gender differences were found in being on the run, thinking about giving himself/herself up, seeing an attorney, traveling abroad, moving away, mixing socially with others, namely, these behaviors occurred similarly for both males and females.

These results reflected that females were more deceptive in their post-offence tactics on one hand, and their immediate regret on the other hand. Females called an ambulance significantly more often (Mmale=0,04; Mfemale=0,36; $p<0.01$; $t=-4.38$), incriminated someone else with the crime (Mmale=0,08; Mfemale=0,29; $p<0.01$; $t=-2.23$), told a false story as a confession (Mmale=0,17; Mfemale=0,43; $p<0.01$; $t=-2.26$) and washed herself or changed her clothing (Mmale=0,24; Mfemale=0,43; $p<0.05$; $t=-1.47$). Males tend to show more heterogenous immediate post-offence reactions,

⁵ For variables of post-offence behaviors coding was the following: 0 = not present; 1 = present

which are reflective of taming their intensive emotional state with alcohol, drugs (went to a pub and consumed alcohol or drug (Mmale=0,19; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.01$; $t=1.81$)), roaming (roamed by car or foot (Mmale=0,10; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.01$; $t=1.21$), spending the prayed money (spent unusually much money (Mmale=0,08; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.05$; $t=1.12$), went shopping (Mmale=0,07; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.05$; $t=1.03$) or of avoiding arrest by getting rid of the evidence (got rid of the evidence (Mmale=0,55; Mfemale=0,29; $p<0.01$; $t=1.83$)). In their subsequent reactions following the media (followed the news in the media (Mmale=0,21; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.01$; $t=1.88$)) and committing another homicide (planned or executed another homicide (Mmale=0,12; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.01$; $t=1.37$)) are characteristic which is reflective of and concurs with the more positive homicide-related feelings. These positive feelings may be a motivation to repeat the experience of homicide (killed again in 6 months (Mmale=0,07; Mfemale=0,00; $p<0.05$; $t=1.03$)) and relive it by returning to the crime scene which males did significantly more often as well (returned to the crime scene (Mmale=0,27; Mfemale=0,07; $p<0.01$; $t=1.6$)).

6. Discussion

The results suggest that though homicide perpetrators are not significantly more prone to anxiety than normal population or than average antisocial subjects, the anxiety experienced after the homicidal act is very high in general, but females report significantly higher level of post-offence stress. It is in line with previous findings of females being more sensitive to stress (Szabó et al., 2010). Furthermore, differences in post-offence emotions demonstrates that males tend to report positive emotions more often e.g., being satisfied, happy, secure and confident after and in relation to the homicide. Sadness, on the other hand is a feeling more characteristic of females' experience.

In terms of coping with this high level of stress and intense feelings after the homicidal act self-punishment, problem centric reaction and deference are the coping mechanisms most commonly used by perpetrators. Social support seeking, emotion focus and emotion discharge are the least applied coping mechanisms in the post-offence phase. This pattern suggests that the offender while passively accepting the negative situation and interpreting it as a result of his or her mistakes and undesirable behaviour, at the same time cannot accept and give up control over and problem solving attempts of the situation. Meanwhile, offenders isolate themselves from social support, avoid discharging the pressure caused by the threatening situation through uncontrolled reactions and cannot effectively shake off the negative emotions caused by the stressful situation. This is reflective of a very tense internal state where tendencies of self-blaming and passively accepting the situation and the lack of capability to give up solving it are present simultaneously, without the possibility of seeking external support and discharging pressure, effectively taming the negative feelings. Beyond this general pattern no significant differences were found in coping preferences between males and females. It is however a possibility that females experience higher level of post-crime stress not only because of their higher proneness to anxiety, but because due to self-preservative reasons they are withdrawn from their primary coping mechanism: social support (Szabó et al., 2010).

Beyond subjectively experienced and reported coping efforts, post-offence behaviors based on the casefiles demonstrated more gender differences. Males tend to

show more heterogeneous immediate post-offence reactions, which are reflective of taming their intensive emotional state with alcohol, drugs, roaming, spending the prayed money or of avoiding arrest by getting rid of the evidence. It is in line with the findings of Szabó et al. (2010) of males' preference of pressure reduction strategies, though avoidant coping strategies, e.g., taking sedatives generally are more characteristic of females. In males' subsequent reactions following the media and committing another homicide are characteristic which is reflective of and concurs with the more positive homicide-related feelings. Their more positive feelings may be a motivation to repeat the experience of homicide.

On the other hand, females more often called and ambulance, washed themselves or changed their clothing as immediate reactions, which were possibly driven by shame, regret or tendency of undoing. These results concur with those of Hakkanen et al. (2009). In the subsequent phase they incriminated someone else with the crime and told a false story as a confession more often as well. These results are reflective of females - if not apprehended immediately - are more deceptive in their post-offence tactics.

7. Conclusions

Post-homicidal behavioral, emotional reactions and coping in general is an underexplored area of research. We know even less about gender differences of post-offence reactions. The present study aimed to contribute to the current knowledge in the field of gender differences in post-homicidal behavior, and emotional reactions and coping mechanisms of perpetrators. Our results indicated that homicide and the post-homicidal phase is very stressful for perpetrators, specially for females while males more often react with positive feelings to the committed crime. In this period there is a very tense internal state where tendencies of self-blaming and passively accepting the situation and the lack of capability to give up solving it are present simultaneously, without the possibility of seeking external support and discharging pressure, effectively taming the negative feelings. However, no significant gender differences were found in the post-offence coping patterns, beyond subjectively experienced and reported coping we did find significant gender differences in the post-offence behaviors drawn from the casefiles. Females tend to show regret and shame in their immediate reactions and deceptive post-offence tactics in the subsequent reactions. Males tend to show more heterogeneous immediate post-offence reactions. On one hand they try to tame their intensive emotional state with alcohol, drugs, roaming or spending the prayed money. On the other hand they attempt to avoid being caught by getting rid of the evidence. In their subsequent reactions following the media and committing or planning another homicide occur more often which is in line with the more positive crime-related feelings of males, which may be a motivation to repeat the experience of homicide.

These results suggest that in the case of female offenders, increased and more rigid hiding and deceptive efforts should be expected, therefore projective investigative and interrogation techniques may be counterproductive. Slow building of trust and acceptance may be an important element which can be used both in interrogative persuasion and in a therapeutic relationship as well. In case of male offenders, investigative tactics and media communication may be based on distinct changes in behavior, aimed to decrease pressure as these attempts may be perceptible to the social

environment of the offender. Furthermore, positive crime-related emotions should be taken into account and explored when working with male offenders specially in therapeutic context.

8. Limitations

Certainly considerable limitations can be listed in our study. Firstly, a relevant proportion of our data was collected from the verdict documents. The documents are rich in details of the homicides and include much information on crime-scene actions on a varying level. Furthermore these documents were not made for research purposes. While these documents are valuable resource of information, we have to keep in mind that because of the lack of homogenous data collection the data may be distorted.

Secondly, all limitations concerning the use of questionnaires versus interviews certainly apply to our study as well. However, homicide is a highly sensitive field and it may be difficult to discuss it even in good therapeutic relationship. The direct exposure in a face-to-face interview may be an impediment in the disclosure, while the anonymity and facelessness provided by questionnaires may enable giving more detailed information.

Thirdly, a significant event like homicide may be subject to a number of (retrospective) bias. All memories fade and, due to the constructive nature of memory, change with time and the intense emotions related to the crime may very well interfere with the encoding as well as the retrieval of information. The retrospective design of our study itself brings the element of recall bias in perpetrators: they are asked to remember feelings and behaviours connected to an event from their past. However, considering the fact that we intended to explore the emotional factors of committing homicide as well as the characteristics of the post-offence period, a prospective design was not possible. Furthermore, beyond objective data on post-offence behavior we intended to investigate the offenders' subjective experience which necessarily may deviate from the factual data.

Certainly, post-offence happenings can not be prescinded from the homicide itself and from the details of the commission. Linkage of crime-scene characteristics and other details of the homicide with the post-offence phase among males and females is a promising area of further research.

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Table 1 – Descriptives and crosstabs of education, marital status, and residence of the participants

			Gender		Total
			male	female	
Education	Less than primary school	Count	8	4	12
		% within Education	66,7%	33,3%	100,0%
		% within Gender	9,8%	22,2%	12,0%
	Primary school	Count	40	8	48
		% within Education	83,3%	16,7%	100,0%
		% within Gender	48,8%	44,4%	48,0%
	Profession without high-school qualification	Count	22	3	25
		% within Education	88,0%	12,0%	100,0%
		% within Gender	26,8%	16,7%	25,0%
	Secondary school	Count	11	3	14
		% within Education	78,6%	21,4%	100,0%
		% within Gender	13,4%	16,7%	14,0%
	University, college	Count	1	0	1
		% within Education	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within Gender	1,2%	0,0%	1,0%
Total		Count	82	18	100
		% within Education	82,0%	18,0%	100,0%
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Marital status	Single	Count	40	2	42
		% within Marital status	95,2%	4,8%	100,0%
		% within Gender	46,5%	11,1%	40,4%

			Gender		Total
			male	female	
	Married, common-law marriage	Count	39	12	51
		% within Marital status	76,5%	23,5%	100,0%
		% within Gender	45,3%	66,7%	49,0%
	Non-marital relationship	Count	3	1	4
		% within Marital status	75,0%	25,0%	100,0%
		% within Gender	3,5%	5,6%	3,8%
	Divorced	Count	4	3	7
		% within Marital status	57,1%	42,9%	100,0%
		% within Gender	4,7%	16,7%	6,7%
Total		Count	86	18	104
		% within Marital status	82,7%	17,3%	100,0%
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Residence	Capital	Count	16	4	20
		% within Residence	80,0%	20,0%	100,0%
		% within Gender	18,6%	22,2%	19,2%
	County centre	Count	17	7	24
		% within Residence	70,8%	29,2%	100,0%
		% within Gender	19,8%	38,9%	23,1%
	Town	Count	25	2	27
		% within Residence	92,6%	7,4%	100,0%

			Gender		Total
			male	female	
		% within Gender	29,1%	11,1%	26,0%
	Village	Count	28	5	33
		% within Residence	84,8%	15,2%	100,0%
		% within Gender	32,6%	27,8%	31,7%
Total		Count	86	18	104
		% within Residence	82,7%	17,3%	100,0%
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
			Pearson Chi-Square		Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Education			2,910		0,573
Marital status			9,356		0,025
Residence			4,416		0,222

Table 2 – Data of scales used in our study

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Cronbach α
STAI TRAIT	129	35,0	57,0	44,40	3,2	-0,327
PO STAI State	123	28,0	80,0	64,30	12,0	0,929
PO CPQ Problem centric reaction	116	13,0	41,0	27,72 (2,52)	6,7 (0,6)	0,824
PO CPQ Social Support seeking	117	8,0	28,0	14,74 (1,84)	5,3 (0,7)	0,820
PO CPQ Pressure control	117	19,0	64,0	40,15 (2,36)	8,4 (0,5)	0,800
PO CPQ Distraction	117	17,0	49,0	31,43 (2,24)	6,7 (0,5)	0,744
PO CPQ Emotion focus	117	12,0	63,0	25,89 (2,16)	7,3 (0,6)	0,524
PO CPQ Emotion discharge	117	8,0	29,0	14,89 (1,86)	4,3 (0,5)	0,678
PO CPQ Self-punishment	117	5,0	20,0	14,50 (2,89)	3,7 (0,7)	0,747
PO CPQ Deference	117	5,0	33,0	12,04 (2,41)	4,2 (0,8)	0,585

Mean numbers in parentheses show scale values.

Table 3 – Independent sample t-test of variables of post-offence emotions, coping strategies and behaviors

Gender		N	Mean	SD	Sig.	t
Age at perpetration	Male	111	28,67	9,2	0,97	-0,894
	Female	18	30,83	11,3		
Returned to the scene **	Male	82	0,27	0,4	0,00	1,60
	Female	14	0,07	0,3		
Followed the news in the media **	Male	68	0,21	0,4	0,00	1,88
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Got rid of the evidence **	Male	84	0,55	0,5	0,00	1,83
	Female	14	0,29	0,5		
Planned or executed another homicide **	Male	83	0,12	0,3	0,00	1,37
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
He/She was on the run	Male	84	0,10	0,3	0,30	-0,54
	Female	14	0,14	0,4		
Spent extraordinarily much money *	Male	83	0,08	0,3	0,02	1,12
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Went to a pub, consumed alcohol or drug **	Male	83	0,19	0,4	0,00	1,81
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Called and ambulance **	Male	83	0,04	0,2	0,00	-4,38
	Female	14	0,36	0,5		
Went to shopping *	Male	83	0,07	0,3	0,03	1,03
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Incriminated someone else with the crime **	Male	83	0,08	0,3	0,00	-2,23
	Female	14	0,29	0,5		
Told a false story as confession **	Male	83	0,17	0,4	0,00	-2,26
	Female	14	0,43	0,5		
Killed again in a short time (6 months) *	Male	83	0,07	0,3	0,03	1,03
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Washed himself/herself or changed clothing *	Male	83	0,24	0,4	0,04	-1,47
	Female	14	0,43	0,5		
Roaming by car or foot **	Male	83	0,10	0,3	0,01	1,21
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Wanted to give up himself/herself but changed his/her mind	Male	83	0,04	0,2	0,14	0,72
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		

Gender		N	Mean	SD	Sig.	t
Went to see an attorney	Male	83	0,02	0,2	0,24	0,58
	Female	14	0,00	0,0		
Traveled abroad	Male	83	0,02	0,2	0,09	-0,88
	Female	15	0,07	0,3		
Moved away	Male	83	0,10	0,3	0,46	0,36
	Female	15	0,07	0,3		
Mixed socially with others	Male	83	0,14	0,4	0,11	0,74
	Female	14	0,07	0,3		
I was sad *	Male	106	1,12	0,8	0,03	-0,93
	Female	16	1,31	0,5		
I felt ashamed	Male	106	1,05	0,8	0,14	-0,98
	Female	16	1,25	0,6		
I felt guilt	Male	104	1,21	0,8	0,17	-0,25
	Female	15	1,27	0,7		
I was satisfied **	Male	105	0,12	0,4	0,01	1,21
	Female	16	0,00	0,0		
I was scared and anxious	Male	105	1,08	0,8	0,09	-0,51
	Female	16	1,19	0,7		
I was happy *	Male	104	0,11	0,4	0,01	1,15
	Female	16	0,00	0,0		
I felt calm, reflective and active	Male	103	0,31	0,6	0,25	-0,41
	Female	16	0,38	0,7		
I felt in secure **	Male	106	0,25	0,5	0,00	1,57
	Female	16	0,06	0,3		
I felt tired	Male	103	0,88	0,7	0,61	-3,02
	Female	16	1,44	0,5		
I felt numb	Male	101	0,85	0,7	0,75	-1,74
	Female	16	1,19	0,8		
I felt confident **	Male	104	0,34	0,6	0,00	1,86
	Female	15	0,07	0,3		
I felt normal like nothing happened *	Male	104	0,28	0,6	0,03	1,03
	Female	16	0,13	0,3		
I experienced paranoia, I felt	Male	105	0,78	0,8	0,37	1,31

Gender		N	Mean	SD	Sig.	t
suspicious and being prosecuted	Female	16	0,50	0,7		
I felt lonely	Male	90	0,82	0,8	0,38	-1,43
	Female	15	1,13	0,7		
Post-offence anxiety (PO STAI state) *	Male	106	63,31	12,3	0,02	-2,32
	Female	17	70,47	7,7		
Problem-centric reaction	Male	100	28,40	6,4	0,94	2,84
	Female	16	23,44	6,9		
Social support seeking	Male	101	14,98	5,3	0,49	1,25
	Female	16	13,19	5,4		
Pressure control	Male	101	40,47	8,1	0,57	1,03
	Female	16	38,13	10,1		
Distraction	Male	101	31,80	6,6	0,84	1,52
	Female	16	29,06	7,4		
Emotion focus	Male	101	25,86	7,0	0,55	-0,10
	Female	16	26,06	9,0		
Emotion discharge	Male	101	14,93	4,4	0,69	0,26
	Female	16	14,63	3,9		
Self-punishment	Male	101	14,36	3,7	0,51	0,82
	Female	16	15,38	4,0		
Deference	Male	101	12,17	4,3	0,41	-0,25
	Female	16	11,25	3,5		

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$

For variables of post-offence behaviors coding was the following: 0 = not present; 1 = present

For variables of offence related and post-offence emotions coding was the following: 0 = not at all; 1 = yes; 2 = very much