

Abstract

The present study explored the structure of sentencing goals in Hong Kong, relating the endorsement of these goals of penal sentencing to punitiveness, values, and social axioms. Consistent with previous research, two dimensions of sentencing goals were identified, Punishment and Rehabilitation. Both dimensions predicted punitiveness, the preferred harshness of penalty. Apart from looking at punitiveness as a behavioral manifestation of sentencing goals, this study also traced the psychological basis for sentencing goals endorsement by investigating the relationships among sentencing goals, values and axioms. Results indicated that the two sentencing goals were associated with certain dimensions of values and axioms. A model with sentencing goals as mediators between values, axioms and punitiveness was established. These results and future research were discussed.