

REVIEW ARTICLE

Psychological Profiling: A Tailored Forensic Investigation

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ABSTRACT

Forensic Psychology is a vast field which comprises of many subdivisions. It focuses on the study of personal, behavioral and psychological characters of the criminal who have committed the crime. Criminal Profiling is the method which includes the entire behaviour and psychology of the culprit. It does not directly leads towards the individual, but it gives the idea regarding the traits or the characteristics of the offender. Criminal Profiling is the emerging field and is used especially in the violent homicidal cases such as murder, rape, arson. This method is useful in investigation and examination of the criminal personality and behavioral descriptions and aids in the identification of type of the person who have committed the crime. Therefore, Criminal Profiling is a standard weapon for the forensic identification. This review paper covers almost all the aspects of criminal profiling and how this method has potential to investigate the heinous crimes.

KEY MESSAGE: Psychology is an emerging field in forensic science. This study focuses on the procedure and application of criminal profiling in the forensic investigation.

KEYWORDS | forensic psychology, criminal profiling, investigation, criminal behaviour

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INTRODUCTION

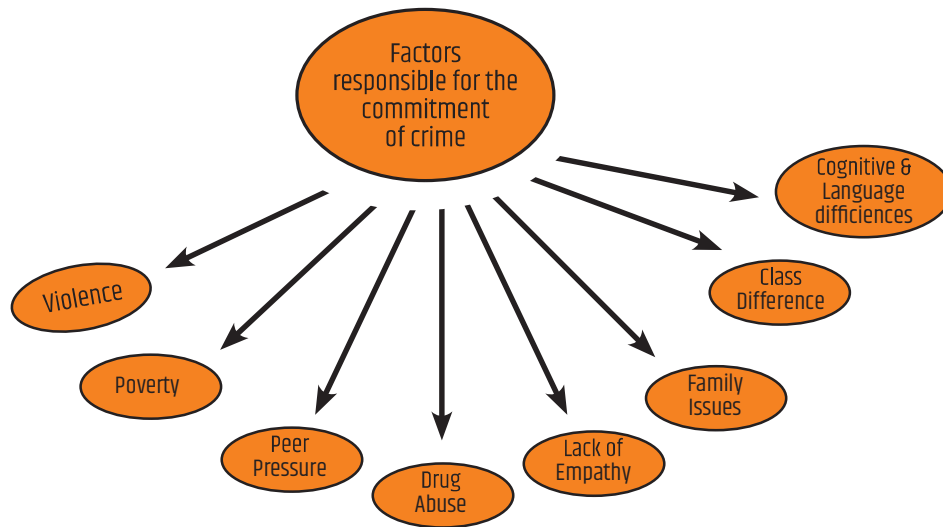
FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY HAS BEEN DEFINED as the sub-discipline of psychology which focuses on the psychological research which aids in the addressing of legal, administrative and contractual matters. This branch is associated with the collection, examination and presenting the evidences for the legal purposes.^{1,8,12} This branch of science aids in investigation by studying the behaviour and mental process. Psychologists have started including this study to study the mind of the culprit, witness or the victim and infer what the cause of the crime is. Forensic psychologists provide important information and guide the officials in the legal system. Like other forensic experts, they also act as expert witness. Their role is to treat and diagnose the criminals and they also administer psychological tests.¹⁰

The field of forensic psychology is generally categorised into two sub fields:

- Legal Psychology
- Criminal / Criminological Psychology

Legal psychology is related to the psychology which is concerned with the law including vulnerable witnesses including juveniles, legal decision making, testimony and memory of the witness, interactions in the court and the role of expert testimony. Criminological psychology is concerned with the investigation, assessment, explanation of the criminal behaviour. Other disciplines that are a part of forensic psychology are victimology and police psychology.¹²

Forensic psychology has immense potential to grow rapidly in the area of investigation. It is an undeniable fact that science brings justice only if it is applied and shared.⁸ The



imperative part of forensic psychology in the criminal investigation is to study the culprit psyche, description of the offender and this includes the parameters like personality traits, behavioral patterns, psychopathologies and the demographic variables including the age, race and geographical location.^{4,9} The main application of this field is to narrow down the number of suspects and to figure out how to interrogate the suspect already in custody.¹⁰

How they become criminals?

Crime is basically an act which is deviant from what the society has already constructed in the past. This act is against the social norms and thus makes a person a criminal. Crime has a devastating effect on the society irrespective of the deceased. Crime and the criminal intent include series of convoluted psychological decisions which influence the criminal unconsciously and the criminal/offender is unaware about the same. Any human being does not acquire this criminal intent during birth. These characteristics are developed over the passage of time. Human is a creature who imitates others and learn.²

The most imperative role is played by sociological criminology in mounting the

psychological criminology in the mind of the culprit. There are certain factors that convince an individual to opt unlawful activities for fulfilling the needs and desires.^{2,7}

Criminal Profiling

Criminal profiling is conducted on the perpetrators who are involved in violent crimes and serial killing. This technique is not used in every case, it is used only when there is an extremely violent crime. The main objective of this technique is the identification of the characteristics of an unknown culprit by analyzing the scenario of the crime scene as well as the victim characteristics. Furthermore, the case scenario is then compared with the prior cases which are somewhat identical. The technique of criminal profiling was first used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1971.^{3,4} The technique provides valuable information to the investigative agencies which will aid in seeking attention on the individual who possesses the same or identical traits with that of other perpetrators who are accused of similar criminal offense. One cannot get the exact details of the criminal but it is helpful in narrowing down the number of suspects.

The assessment of the culprit in the

psychological profiling is made on the basis of various factors including age, sex, marital status, employment, education level, the possibility of confessing the crime etc. Profiling makes the use of combination of psychological socio-legal theories and sociological concepts in order to establish the linkage in the characteristics of the culprit. The behaviour and the motivation of the specific offender is studied on the basis of physical evidences at the individual crime scene. Criminal profiling is unchallenged in some cases. On the other hand, some cases are quite obscure. The profilers look for the similarities and dissimilarities to get more information regarding the offender.¹

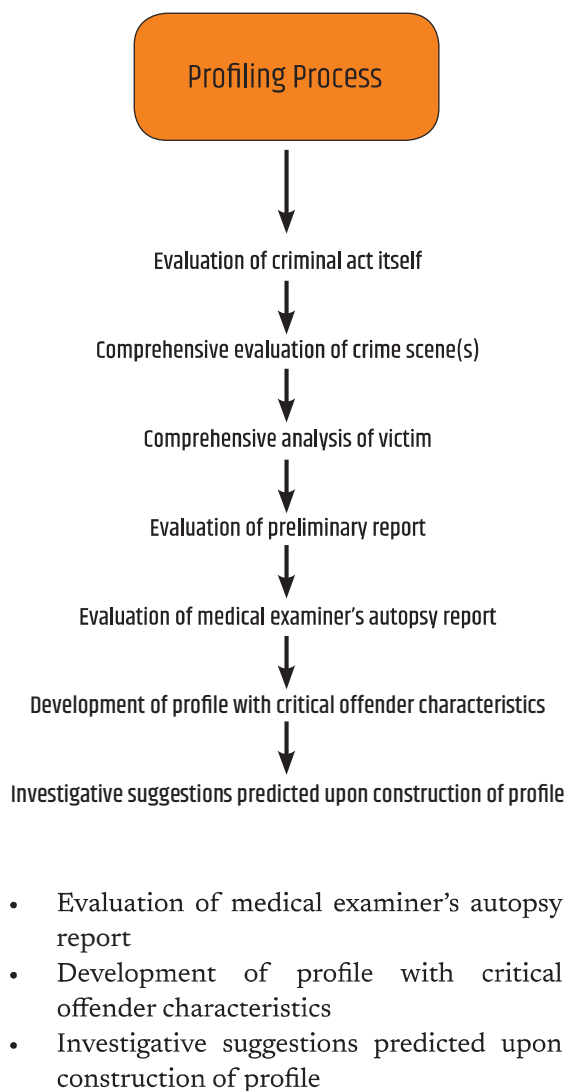
Profiling

A profile of a criminal is an assemblage of the inferences that are made on the basis of qualities of person who are under suspicion of committing the crime or series of crimes. The profiling process also focuses on the issues involving political, artistic as well as criminal behaviour. Psychological profile is also known as "Paper Tiger". This profiling is forensically important in the investigation and sometimes is destructive in some cases when it diverts the investigation procedure and mislead it.^{4,6} The parameters which are required for the creation of the profile include:

- Photographs collected from the crime scene
- Demographic data
- Medical reports including autopsy
- Travel history of the deceased prior to the crime
- Comprehensive investigation of the crime scene
- Entire background and life history of the deceased or victim.

The process of profiling involves the following steps:

- Evaluation of criminal act itself
- Comprehensive evaluation of crime scene(s)
- Comprehensive analysis of victim
- Evaluation of preliminary report



Purpose of Profiling

The main objective of psychological assessment of the crime scene is to reduce the scope of police investigation as it helps in exclusion process and aids towards the successful resolution. It suggests the effective ways of interviewing and assists the criminal justice system to fight against the crime. Further more, it helps in eventual identification of the culprit and other investigative processes. In addition to this, it is helpful in unfolding facts and facets of the offence by focusing the investigative resources in one particular direction. One can identify eventually the offender in conjugation with other investigation procedure.^{1,11}

S. NO.	INDUCTIVE REASONING NOMOTHETIC APPROACH	DEDUCTIVE REASONING IDIOGRAPHIC APPROACH
1.	Time efficient	Time consuming
2.	Inexpensive and less laborious	Expensive and laborious
3.	Less effective	More effective
4.	No skills are required for behavioral studies	Expert is required for behavioural studies
5.	Encourages egocentricity and investigative short-cuts	Encourages deliberation, competency and thoroughness

Table 1: Difference between Inductive and Deductive reasoning

S. NO.	ORGANIZED CRIME SCENE	DISORGANIZED CRIME SCENE
1.	Average or above average IQ	Below average IQ
2.	Employed, usually quite skilled	Unstable employment record, unskilled
3.	Self-competent	Socially isolated
4.	Uses alcohol in commission of crime	Lives close to crime scene
5.	Uses car to drive to crime scene	Strict discipline as a child
6.	Obsessed with media coverage of his crimes	Extremely anxious

Table 2: Difference between Organised and Disorganised crime scene suggested by offender

S. NO.	ORGANIZED CRIME SCENE	DISORGANIZED CRIME SCENE
1.	Body is hidden.	Body is not hidden.
2.	Weapon is removed from scene.	Weapon is present.
3.	It appears to be well-planned.	It appears to be spontaneous.
4.	Victim is specifically targeted.	Victim may be an acquaintance.
5.	Aggression takes place before death.	Aggression or sex post-mortem.

Table 3: Difference between Organised and Disorganised crime scene

Different Types of Profiling

Profiling is of three types. These are as follow: Crime scene profiling involves the analysis of crime scene for drawing the conclusions about the culprit. Psychological profiling involves the use of expertise of a professional psychologist or profiler who provides information regarding the personality traits of the offender. While offender profiling use combination of all available information from crime scene as well as from the psychologist/profiler.^{1,9}

Different Phases of Profiling

The four different phases of profiling are explained below:

Methods of Profiling

Various methodologies are employed to

develop the criminal profile. The methodology either focuses on the development of offender's profile or on the complete understanding of the modus operandi (MO).^{1,9,11} By analyzing the modus operandi, the investigators get the events lead to the crime scene. There are basically two methods of profiling:

Nomothetic Approach / Inductive Reasoning

In this method of reasoning, the characteristics are observed on the basis of broad generalizations and statistical analysis. Thus, leading to the development of the hypothesis. It is generally regarded as an average. Inductive reasoning is the set of characteristics of the culprit which comprises of co-relation, experiential as well as statistical inferences.

Idiographic Approach / Deductive Reasoning

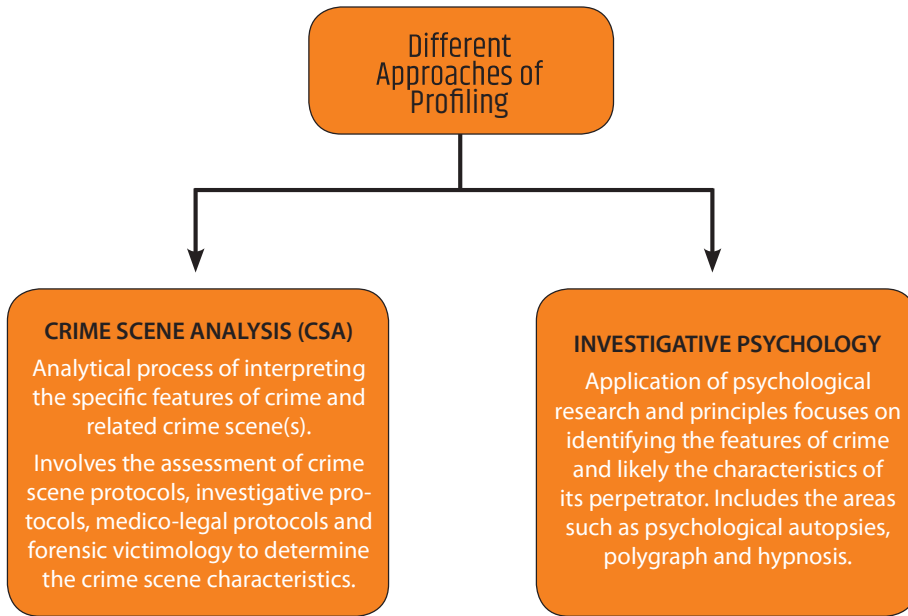


Figure 1: Different approaches of Profiling

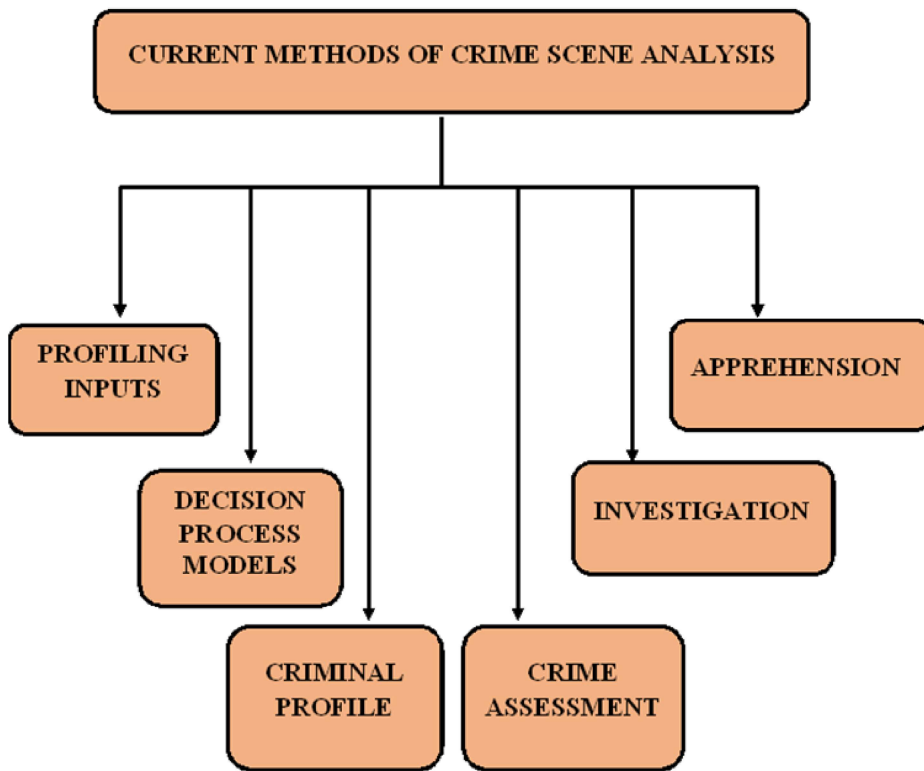
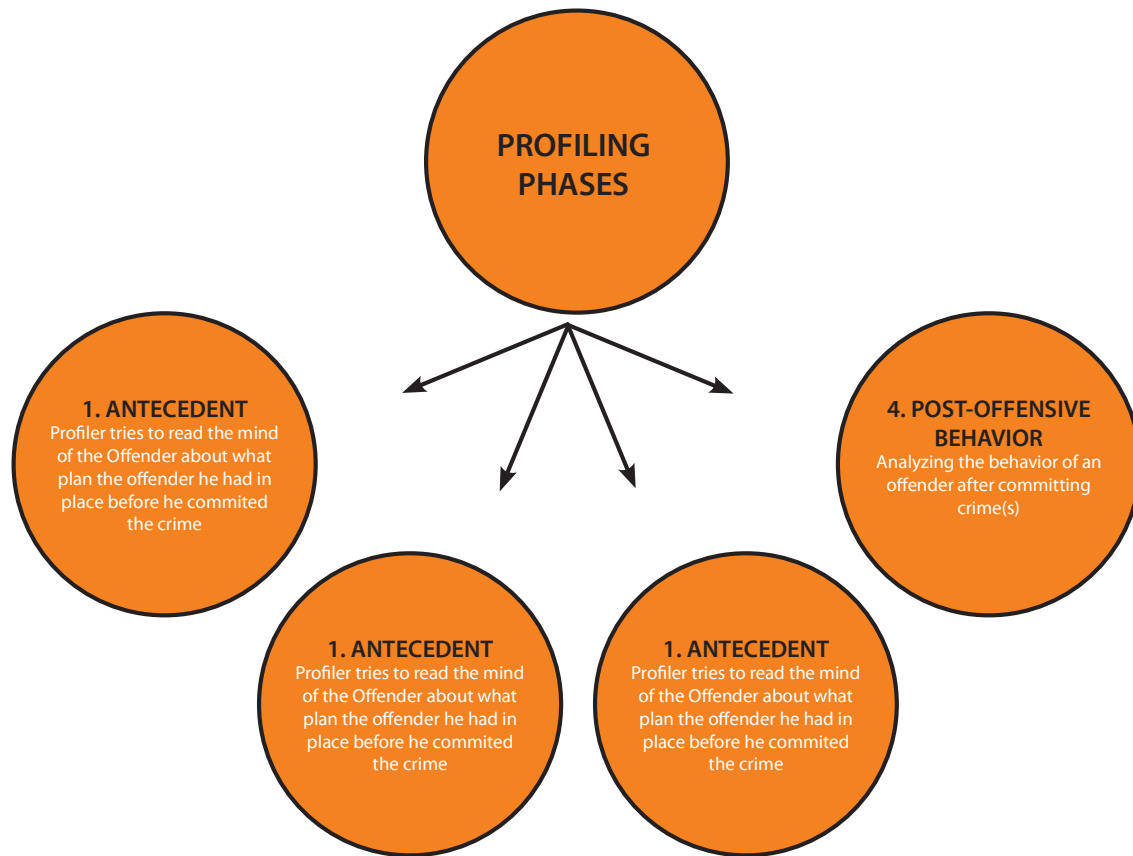


Figure 2: Current methods of Crime scene Analysis



In this reasoning method, a set of characteristics are observed that might be reasoned from convergence of physical and behavioral actions or patterns. These actions also include the modus operandi. This is also termed as “Behavioral Evidence Analysis”. The behavior of the culprit at crime scenes such as emotions, individual patterns, personality and offensive behavior can be deduced. Deductive reasoning is dynamic and hence, re-examined when new information is available. The difference between inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning are described in Table 1, above.

Different Approaches of Profiling

Criminal profiling is usually a vague process.^{1,3} This technique is majorly categorized into two types as depicted in Figure 1.

Crime scene analysis made popular by the Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) for solving violent crimes in 1970s. There are different methods

of crime scene analysis which are currently used during analysis process.^{1,3} These methods include:

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), there are several stages of investigation for the generation of profile of the culprit, as depicted in Figure 3:

Crime scene classification is the second stage of profiling process. According to this classification, crime scene has two types: Organized crime scene and Disorganized crime scene.

These types of crime scenes reveal different aspects regarding the psychology of the offender. The differences between the offenders on the basis of crime scene are described in Table 2 and 3.

Applications Of Criminal Profiling

Criminal profiling is an imperative tool in criminal justice system and is used in crimes

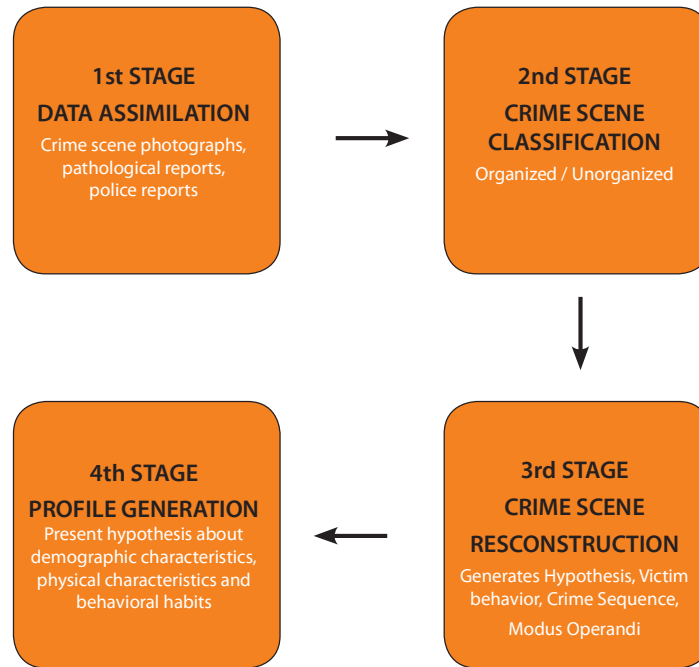


Figure 3: Stages of Investigation

which are extremely violent. Such crimes create terror and fear among the society because of their randomness as well as an ambitious nature. Violent homicide cases are very challenging to solve because of their randomness. Crimes such as assaults, murders, serial killing etc. are investigated with criminal profiling.^{1,3} The more adverse the crime is, more would be the likelihood of the profile to be used. Criminal profiling is used in cases such as:

- Sexual assaults and homicide
- Other homicides such as torture, mutilation, ritualistic violence
- Arson and explosive cases
- Assassination
- Extortion

This helps in leading the investigation by narrowing down the number of suspects and by making use of personality, behaviour as well as psychopathy to interrogate the offender. It also suggests the investigators with investigative and proactive strategies as well as the trial strategies.^{1,5,3}

Case Study: A Serial Killer

Jeffery Dahmer was a 31 years old white man

who was a serial killer and was also known as “Lust Killer”. He was having repressed hostility, frustrated acceptance and was rejected by his peers. He was going through intense loneliness and then attributed his motive of action towards lust. He usually had homosexual as well as homicidal fantasies. Jeffery captured 15 young men and killed them brutally, some of them were even raped by him. Dahmer was profiled by a psychologist to infer his psychology regarding his criminal intent at the time he was committing the crime. While he was interrogated by the criminal psychologist, he was found calm and free from emotional liability, his answers were logical and relevant and he was confidently answering them.

After analyzing and interrogating him on the basis of his psychology, he was then undergone through psychological testing, MRI, EEG and chromosomal analysis. These psychological and medical testing methods resulted that Jeffery Dahmer was suffering from mixed personality disorder along with sadistic, obsessive, necrophiliac, cannibalic as well as fetischistic characteristics and hence

he was stated as an organized, non-social “Lust murderer”. He was consequently sentenced to life imprisonment.^{11,12}

definitely help the investigators as well as the law enforcement agencies to solve the cases in a more efficient way. **IJFMP**

CONCLUSION

Criminal Psychology is a valuable tool for combating the heinous crimes by using psychological and behavioral aspects of the culprit. This technique is not specific and does not give assurance as it sometimes provides the investigative lead or sometimes mislead the investigators. Criminal profiling is a multi-disciplinary field in the forensic scenario as the expert must have keen knowledge in psychology, criminalistics and medico-legal death investigation. The expert who interrogates the offender uses variety of techniques and methods to get ample knowledge about the culprit and the crime. The expert firstly evaluates the crime scene and then gathers information from the victim and the witnesses. Finally, he assembles the entire information which is collected to apprehend the criminal. Moreover, new and advanced databases are required to be prepared for all such crimes. These databases would

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that there is no commercial or financial links that could be construed as conflict of interests.

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